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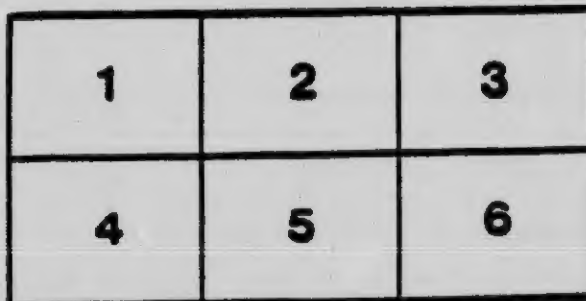
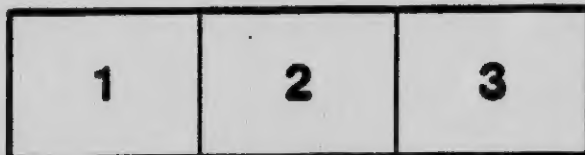
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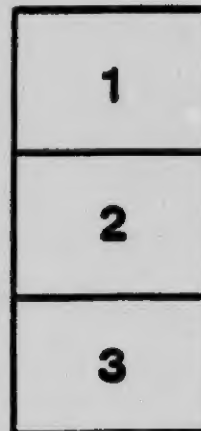
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TURNPIKE**

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KINDLY HANDS BOUND UP HIS WOUNDS

**WILLIAM ADOLPHUS
TURNPIKE
BY
WILLIAM BANKS**



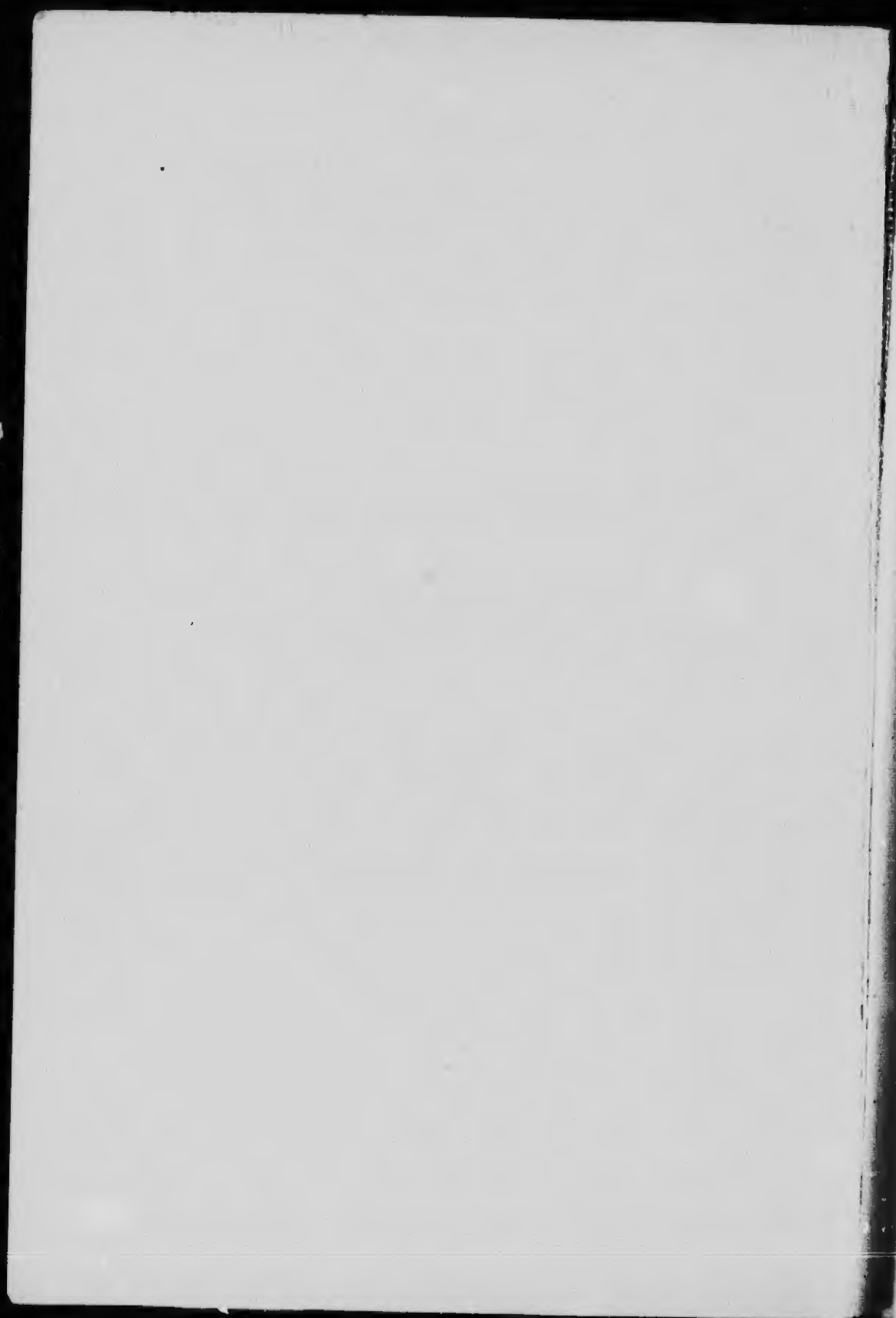
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TO MY MOTHER



WILLIAM ADOLPHUS TURNPIKE

CHAPTER I

"WHAT! never been to a political meeting; an' you living in a city. Back to the hamlet for you, boy; you're lost.

"You're not? You know where you live, and could find your way home in the dark? My, but you're cert'nly the quick actor when it comes to thinking.

"Sure I've been to more'n a dozen political meetin's. Ain't my Pa a member er the executive of Ward Eighteen Conservative Club? He's a charter member, too. Don't he rent the parlor for a pollin' booth on votin' day, hire himself for a scrooteneer, and have my uncle Henry for constable?

"Your father wouldn't do them things, eh! Well, maybe he ain't never had the chance.

"The first political meeting I went to? Well it was in the hall where the Sons of Italy meets, and Pa he ain't got no business there really because it's not his gang what's holding

▲

the meeting. It's all furriners organised into the Ward Eighteen European Reform Club by Jimmy Duggan, the coal and woodyard man. My Pa and Jimmy Duggan is great friends. Jimmy says to Pa, he says, 'Come along, Joe, I got the greatest bunch of murd-erers of English into the club you ever seen,' he says, 'and to-night the Honorable Wallace Fixem, Minister of Public Works, is going to attend our inaggeral meetin',' he says, 'and give us a spiel.'

"And my Pa says, 'How much are you gettin' out of it, Jimmy?' he says.

"And Jimmy says, 'Far be it from me to bandy words with a hopeless dyed-in-the-wool Tory,' he says, 'what's agoin' blindly to his crool end,' he says, 'in spite of—'

"And then Ma butts in. 'That'll do for you, Jimmy Duggan,' she says. 'Both of them political parties is rotten,' she says, 'and you know it.'

"And Jimmy—Gee! but he's the great actor—he looks at Ma with a long face on him, and he says, 'Madam,' he says, 'I admit that the party to which my poor friend here belongs,' he says, 'is all to the bad. I admit,' he says, 'that it has sunk—'

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"And Ma says, 'Get out, Jimmy,' she says, 'and take Joe with you.'

"And Pa says, 'Ma,' he says, 'how about Willyum coming along,' and you bet I'm listenin' hard that time.

"And Ma says, 'I'm afraid,' she says, 'about them 'Talians. S'pose they got to fighting, anybody might stick a steeletter into the boy,' she says.

"'Pardon me, madam,' says Jimmy, 'you are doing a great wrong,' he says, 'to our noble feller citerzens——'

"And Ma gets up like she was in a kind of a hurry and she says if Pa don't take Jimmy away she'll throw 'em both out, and Pa can take me to the meeting. And we went.

"Say, you'd orter seen the bunch in that hall. I guess there was some from every country on the map of Europe, and other places too we ain't never dreamed of. It was a cold night, and they had the stove goin'. Me and Pa, we sits near the door because Pa says that when the meetin' gets agoin' they's no telling about what kind of a trouble there might be in a hall like that, and it's us where we can slip out when we wants to.

"Next to my Pa was a feller with whiskers a mile long, and pop eyes, and when Jimmy Duggan left us and starts down to the platform this feller says to Pa, 'Ain't he the great man!' he says.

"And my Pa says, 'He ain't so bad for a Swede.'

"And the man says, 'He ain't no Swede. No! Sir.'

"And my Pa says, 'Since when ain't he a Swede when he's born in Swedeland?'

"'There ain't no such country,' says the man, 'you mean Sweden,' he says, and my Pa says, 'I means just what I say,' he says.

"And the man looks at him and he says, 'Mister Duggan,' he says, 'is an Irishman.'

"'With er name like that,' says my Pa, 'impossible. 'Sides I never heard of Irishmen. What country do they come from?' and, honest, my Pa never batted an eyelid. Gee! but he's a grand jollier. And I thought the man's eyes would drop out; I almost felt like holdin' out my hands to catch 'em. And he says to my Pa, he says, 'Where do you come from?' and Pa says, 'A free country,' he says, 'where every man gets a square deal and can say what he likes.'

"Well, the man looked at him hard and he says, very sarkastic, he says, 'Where's that?'

" 'Russia,' says Pa, and, say, you'd orter heard that man yell. Honest, it made me sick at the stomach. Jimmy Duggan was just giving the committee the last orders on the platform when that yell man cut loose. Jimmy he looks around like he'd been shot, takes a flying leap off'n the platform, and comes rushing down towards my Pa and the man with the whiskers and the buiging eyes. And the man was yelling all the time like the fans do at the baseball game when the score's a tie and the home team's heavy hitter slugs the ball on the left ear for a home run. And he was standing up pointing at Pa with a hand the size of a shovel, and all the rest of the bunch around us was getting restless and cacklin' furrin' talk.

"So when Jimmy gets up to the man with the steam whistle in his throat, he grabs him by the whiskers, gives 'em a tug like he'd pull 'em off, and he says pretty sharp, 'Sit down.' And the feller set, and just as he did he opens his mouth to let out another yell, and Jimmy grabs a cap from another man's head and sticks it in his mouth, and that stopped him.

So after he gets the cap out, Jimmy says, 'Now what's the row?'

"And the man points at my Pa and says, 'That man says Russia is a free country,' he says, and starts in to give another yell, only Jimmy lifts a finger at him and the man stops with his mouth open, and he looked foolish I tell you. So then Jimmy bends down and whispers something in the man's ear, and the feller smiles and pats Pa on the shoulder gentle-like, every once in a while, and Pa lets on he never notices it, though I seen he's kinder mad about something.

"Just as Jimmy gets back to the platform a Dago and a Hungarian gets to words about who's the best mus-i-cans in the ward.

"Oh! moosicians, is it? Have it your own way.

"You see the Hungarians was awful mad because the Dagos beat 'em out catering to supply the music for the night, and the Dago orchestra was playing the swellest ragtime music you ever heard. Well, them two gets to blows, and about fifteen others are jumping around ready to pile in when Jimmy Duggan begins to pound on the table with a wooden hammer what they uses in lodges and club rooms.

"A gavel, eh! Very well, me learned friend, I'll not dispute it.

"He bangs so hard they all quits their scrap-ping and begins to take notice. 'I am just informed, gentlemen,' says Jimmy, 'that the Honorable Fixem is now on the stairs on his way into this meeting, and I would ask the ork-estra,' he says, 'to greet him with a few bars of——'

"And just then the door opens, and a little processioⁿ. comes in escortin' the Honorable Fixem, and the ork-estra leader waves his hand frantic and the ork-estra strikes up 'All Coons Look Alike to Me.' Well, say, you'd orter heard the row. Some was cheerin' and some was laughin', and the Honorable Fixem he was looking like a sheep outer the meadows, and Jimmy Duggan yells out, 'Stop that tune, darn it,' he says, and the ork-estra man leader he didn't hear what Jimmy says and he thought that he wanted it louder, so he waves his hands like mad and the ork-estra sails into that tune like they'd never quit it, until Jimmy leans over and grabs the leader by the back of the neck and nearly chokes the breath outer him, and the ork-estra is just comin' for Jimmy en massey

when the leader says something in Italian and they sits down again looking kinder sad and strikes up 'See the Con'kring Hero Comes,' and the Honorable Fixem gets on the platform. Gee! you'd think that bunch'd never stop yellin'. They just cheered and cheered. Then they begins to present illumernated addresses in every language but Scotch, and my Pa says Scotch ain't anything but two scones on each side of a burr. So when they gets through Jimmy Duggan calls on the Honorable Fixem for a speech, and Fixem started in.

"Say, I never knowed a gover'ment was so much like angels before. The things what the gover'ment's done for this country, judging by the way Fixem told it, is enough to make people want to keep 'em in for ever. My Pa says it's mostly guff, but the pollertishans has gotter feed the people with that kinder guff ev'ry once in a while, he says, they get fat on it, he says.

"Well, everything goes on fine 'cepting some cheers once in a while, until the Honorable gets down to the gover'ment's plans for the immigrants. And he says something about not stooping to bribe any man to cast a vote for the gover'ment by promising to find work for him,

but there's a big programme of gover'ment works to be done in the neighbourhood, which, of course, will help to make good times, he says.

"Just then somebody gets up in the hall and yells out, 'Rotten, rotten, what you caller dat but de bribe, eh?' and another feller shies a pineapple at him, whatever he had it there for. Pa says mebbe he's ripenin' it by the stove so as to sell it the next day. Anyway it misses the man what's makin' the noise and hits the ork-estra leader on the brain-house, and the next I knowed Pa has me downstairs—it's only one flight—and he says to me, 'We'll wait for Jimmy,' he says, and we did.

"And every minute we waited there was something doing. Why there was Greeks and Hungarians and Dagos and ail kinds coming out the winders or rolling down the stairs and rushing back again, some of them with their noses bleeding and their clothes torn, and all the time shoutin' like mad. Then all of a sudden everything calms down to a whisper, and men began to fly outer that buildin' and run away like mad.

"So when the Honorable Fixem's safely in his carriage, and Jimmy Duggan's walking

home with Pa and me, Pa says, 'What stopped it, Jimmy?' And Jimmy says, 'Well, I just got a few of the fellers together,' he says, 'and we hollers "Steeletters, steeletters," and that scared 'em, you bet, for they're all afraid of their lives of them "Talian knives.'

" 'Pretty smart hit, Jimmy,' Pa says, 'but it's almost a pity you didn't get three inches or so of steeletter in your hide,' he says, 'after what you said to that feller sittin' beside me.' 'Well,' says Jimmy, 'he's a Russian,' he says, 'what was mixed up in some of the Nillyist plots, and the only way to keep him quiet,' he says, 'was to tell him you'd been driven looney by the cruelty of the Russian gover'ment,' he says."

Thus William Adolphus Turnpike, office boy, to Lucien Torrance, who held a similar exalted position. They were sitting on the front stairs leading to the adjoining offices occupied by Mr. Whimble and his friend Simmons, the architect, in the city of Toronto. The city was then at the transition period; its population had just passed the 200,000 mark, and already included a fair number of lunatics who clamored for a million people. But it had not yet made up its

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mind that dumping sewage into the Bay and believing that it would not contaminate the adjoining lake, whence came the water supply, was a system apt to result in a large proportion of typhoid fever cases. People had typhoid, and either died of it or got better, and in the latter event they resumed the drinking of the city water.

CHAPTER II

WILLIAM had engaged himself to work for Mr. Charles Whimple, "barrister, etc.," just one week previously in response to that gentleman's advertisement for "a bright and intelligent office boy; one who knows the city well." When he arrived at the office on the morning after the insertion of the advertisement, Whimple found William busily engaged in writing off the lone table in his room. At the back of the office, with its small, very small, a. re-room, was the office of his friend, Simmons, and as he was usually down an hour earlier than Whimple, he "opened up" and kept an eye on things for the barrister until he arrived. As Whimple entered, William greeted him with a cheery "Good-morning, Mr. Whimple."

"Good-morning, what are you doing here?"

"I'm your office boy."

"You are——"

"Sure," said William cheerily, "I sent the other bunch away."

"The other bunch——"

"Yep; say, Mr. Whimple——"

"But just a minute," Mr. Whimple interrupted, "how did you know my name? H. e we met before?"

"Search me—if we did we wasn't introduced."

"Then how did you know?"

William stopped dusting and regarded him thoughtfully.

"How did you know?" Whimple repeated.

"I always know," the boy repeated slowly, and then, as though communing with himself, "yes, I always know," and, as to-day there was that in William's voice that haunted and held Whimple, as it has done many since. But that comes later.

William went on still dusting slowly. "Say, Mister Whimple, I mayn't be much, but the rest of the gang was the greatest c'lection er mutts you ever seen. Honest, I don't believe there was one of 'em could say the alphabet without thinking ten minutes first. And I needed the job most anyway."

"How do you know?"

"Because I looked 'em over good, and I heard 'em saying how many hours' work they'd

do a day and how much they wanted for it, and most of 'em was saying about how they showed their other bosses what's what. So I knew they didn't want a job; they just wanted a place to bum in. You should'er heard me shooin' 'em away. I told 'em you had made your selection and I was it."

Whimple smiled and William returned the salute. He saw in his employer a young man, tall, with a brown-eyed, good-looking face, and a head of red hair. And Whimple saw a rather thin but healthy-looking lad with a somewhat long face, a nose that William himself always referred to as "pug," round blue eyes, freckles, and hair—well, just "mouse coloured" William's mother always called it.

Their acquaintanceship ripened into friendship very fast; too fast Whimple thought, for by mid-afternoon he had told the boy a great deal about himself and his past and his prospects. And William had listened, asking a question occasionally, sometimes interjecting a remark, and always, so Whimple says now, with an aptness that surprised and delighted him. William evinced no surprise and no regret when informed that bright as were the

prospects, two dollars a week, for the present, was the maximum salary he could hope for.

"Don't worry about that," said William when Whimple apologised for the smallness of the amount. "It'll help some at home, and mebbe I ain't worth no two dollars a week anyhow."

"Don't underestimate yourself, William," said Whimple.

"No chance of me doing that. Say, Mr. Whimple, supposin' I'm any good and business improves, me salary goes up too—that's right, ain't it?"

"That's right, my boy."

"Then," solemnly, "it's up to us to increase the business, and to make this office too small to hold the people that want to hire you."

And Whimple smiled again. The lad's cheeriness, the eagerness of the keen young face, and the tone of the voice put new heart into him. The fame he had dreamed of on the day he had been called to the bar was still a phantom; the struggle to earn a living in the profession he had chosen in the years when youth brooked no obstacles was keener far than ever he had believed possible, yet there remained to him hope, courage, and the determination to "look

for the silver lining." At thirty he had few clients, and a legacy that brought him just \$6.00 a week, and often had been his only barrier against real want. His father and mother had died while he was just a boy; relatives had given him a home until at eighteen he had started "clerking" in a law office, and with his wages and his legacy had carried himself through to the day when his name appeared among those called to the bar. Simmons he had met in the clerking days; the young architect was financially better equipped than the lawyer, and Whimple had not hesitated at times to accept of his assistance—though he never felt free until the obligation had been repaid. It was Simmons who had insisted on the arrangement for the adjoining office, though Whimple at first had strongly demurred. But, indeed, an office floor with a front entrance and a rear stairway that landed you on a lane leading to a back street was not without advantages when money was scarce and bill collectors plentiful.

To many it may seem remarkable, to others amusing, and to the minority a thing unbelievable, that before the end of the first week William should have been manager of the office

so far as its routine was concerned. Every one who has had the honour of acquaintance with a first-class office boy will understand. Those who have not had that experience will not, and to them is added those who do not regard boys, office or otherwise, as having the remotest bearing upon, connection with, or part in the working of the world of to-day. Your first-class office boy inspires fear. He knows his indispensability; he knows that more than anything else the boss loathes the trouble of hiring an office boy; he knows—oh! what does he not know? You who have never had to do with him, or depend upon him, go sit at the feet of him who has and try to grasp the outer rim of understanding as to the depth and height and width of the wisdom and learning, the profound knowledge of the only human being to whom the Kings of Finance and Commerce (see any daily paper) appear as they really are—just men.

Sometimes an office boy is beloved—and that not always—for the virtues that tell most in actual work. Or may be a streak of cheeriness in the otherwise inscrutable bearing; it may be a confiding, "Oh! may I trust in you, boss?" kind of manner; it may be that in the man who

hires him there still remains—though now well controlled—that love of fun and careless mischievousness that seems to be peculiar to the office boy of all nationalities. What one or what combination of any or all of these qualities Whimple found quite early in William still remains a mystery.

Coming back to William, it is to be observed that while he became Grand Master of Ceremonies in full charge of the office routine, he exercised his authority with discretion and tact. By the end of the first month, he had won Whimple to an announcement on the outer door to the effect that office hours were from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and he had established his own luncheon hour as from 12 to 1. "It wouldn't do for you," he said gravely to Whimple, "to be takin' your lunch then, because you're a per-fession'l man. You gotter keep up with the procesh if you wanten make good."

Whimple laughed, but nodded his acceptance of the idea. "You're an inspiration, William," he said. "You've so much sunshine in your composition that you are shedding it nearly all the time, consciously or unconsciously, on the worthy and unworthy alike."

And he spoke truly; William exercised no discrimination in this regard. You could take it or leave it. Unless you had just lost some one near and dear to you, or otherwise tasted the dregs of sorrow or remorse, you couldn't ordinarily stay within a few yards of William and grieve. Not that he had not suffered, young as he was. Not that he could not and did not grieve with those he knew were in sorrow or distress; you are not to think that of William.

CHAPTER III

WHIMPLE early discovered that William was not a model of integrity, diligence, and rectitude. Though an office boy he had his failings, and William's explanations of them were as curious, but quite as characteristic, as the lad himself.

"When it comes to business matters, Mister Whimple," he said with a dignity that almost upset the young lawyer's effort to appear gravely judicial, "it's me on the level. You can trust me to tell the truth and do the right thing. But when it comes to spinnin' yarns, nobody don't have to b'lieve 'em. Honest, I don't know when I'm telling the truth about 'em myself."

"That is a curious psychological problem, William."

"Gee! is it as bad as that? I hope it ain't fatal."

Whimple smiled. "No," he said, slowly, "and yet, my boy, there is only one way to build up a good reputation. Do you go to Sunday school?"

"Well—not reg'lar. Sunday's the busy time for me."

"Busy! Why?"

"Sure—I take the kiddies out if it's fine, and maybe we don't have the bully times. Say"—his eyes were shining now, and he stood a little closer to Whimple, who was sitting on the table—"there's Pete, he's nine and a holy terror, and Bessie, she's six, and Joey, he's about four. And Dolly—say, Mister Whimple, you'd orter see Dolly, she's got big brown eyes, and brown hair, and a kinder solemn little face. She——"

"Are you spinning yarns now, William?"

"It's between man and man now, Mister Whimple—this ain't no yarn. My Pa says he uster think no man could keep a buncher kids like us and be happy, and now he thinks no man could be happy without a bunch like us, and Ma says it's hard scrapin' sometimes, but she wouldn't be without one of us for a thousand feeter land on the main street, and that's going some."

"What does your father do, William?"

"Pa, he's an express-man, and a good one at that, Mister Whimple. He owns two horses and rigs, and I tell you he keeps agoing all day

long, Saturdays too, an' he's a-buyin' the house we're in, an' it ain't no cinch of a job liftin' a mortgage. Many's the time I've heard him say he wished he could lift it as easy as he lifts some of the trunks he carts."

"And what are you going to be, William?"

And William was silent. He flushed a little, toyed with a button of his vest, and finally answered in a low tone—

"I know what I want to be, and sometimes I think I know how to get there, and sometimes I don't, and I'd rather not tell it just now."

"I hope you'll succeed, William—if your aim is a lofty one."

"Well," drawled William, "it's some high, and Tommy Watson says I'm bughouse, but I tell him he's a bit that way himself."

"Tommy Watson, the auctioneer?"

"Sure—say, Mister Whimple, ain't he a pippin? My Pa says he can make people buy rocks and weep with joy on the bargains they're gettin' in diamon's."

That day Whimple called on Tommy Watson, famed as the peer of auctioneers. To those who counted among his friends and acquaintances, and they were as numerous as the wise "I-

told-you-so's" on the day after an election or a prize fight, Tommy was always an inspiration and a delight. His long rambling store, with its wonderful stock of furniture, books, nick-nacks, pictures, all that goes to add zest to the life of the bargain-hunters and auction regulars, was a gathering-place for all classes. Tommy knew and was respected by the men whose names meant power and money; he was beloved by many a wage-earner for the help he gave in the all-important problems of home furnishing, and he was the idol of one William Adolphus Turnpike.

Whimple lost no time in preliminaries. "I've got an office boy, Tommy," he said, "and——"

"One William Adolphus Turnpike, to wit," Tommy broke in.

"The same; he's quite a character, Tommy."

"A good lad though," said the auctioneer, "and a friend of mine."

"He says you know what he wants to be, and that you think he's bughouse."

Tommy laughed. "He spends an hour here every morning," he said.

"What!"

"Turns up as regular as the clock at about

fifteen minutes to eight, and stays until he has just time to get to the office on the stroke of nine."

There was a long pause, each man regarding the other thoughtfully. It was Tommy who relieved the situation.

"So far as I know," he said slowly, "he has confided in no one but myself and one other regarding his plans. He's only a boy; he may change his mind any day. But I don't think it. I never knew any one, man, woman, or child, so earnest and determined."

"You know how I'm situated, Tommy; mighty little yet but hope—and, thank God, I've never lost that. It's really a shame, Tommy, paying him the princely salary of two dollars per, but I need him. Tommy, if you think it best not to tell, don't."

Tommy understood. "It might help," he said, "and I can depend upon you to keep silence. Come along."

He led the way to the back of the store, where his bachelor apartments were situated—a bedroom and a library—a most curious library, for Tommy was an omnivorous reader and particularly given to romances.

In one corner of the room was a small book-case with perhaps fifty books carefully arranged; a little desk and an arm-chair. "That's his corner," said Tommy abruptly; "look at the books."

Whimple looked over the titles rapidly, then more closely. "Plays," he murmured, "the lives of actors, more plays, *The Comedian, Garrick, Nell Gwynn*," then turning to Tommy and raising his voice, "he wants to be an actor?"

"Yep."

"But many boys think that—almost every boy thinks that."

"But not the way this boy does."

"Yes, but can he read these, Tommy? I never heard any one murder English like William does. Yet he does it so winningly—that's the word, I think—that any jury would acquit him. And his slang—uh!" He shrugged his shoulders.

"Fierce, ain't it?" said Tommy smilingly.

"But can he really read these books?" Whimple reiterated.

"You should hear him and see him tackling the dictionary when he's stuck. Besides—I'm

telling you everything mind in confidence—
'Chuck' Epstein reads with him."

"Epstein! Whew!—and in his day he was
the greatest comedian of them all. And a
Jew!"

"And a man," said Tommy Watson with a
note of challenge in his voice.

"I've heard much of his kindnesses," Whimple
said, "but know him only by sight."

"He's a great friend of mine," said Tommy;
"he spends nearly all his mornings here; has
done since he retired from the stage. He's
getting feeble, but his mind is as clear as ever,
and his heart—well, his heart has never grown
old."

"William Adolphus Turnpike, Epstein, re-
tired comedian, Tommy Watson, auctioneer,"
said Whimple softly, and then looking up he
found Watson regarding him with a whimsical
smile.

"Us three, and no more—Amen, as the
Three Guardsmen used to say," Tommy said.

"Well, not exactly in those words," Whimple
replied.

"But meaning the same," Tommy retorted,
"so what's the difference? Believe me," he

went on, "the boy is safe with us. If his ambition sticks—why, he'll land."

"You're a good sort, Tommy Watson," said Whimple warmly as he left the shop, "I wish I could do more to help the boy."

"You're doing lots," said Tommy genially, "lots, and—well, the legal world'll take off its hat to you yet."

CHAPTER IV

MEANWHILE our hero, as Vivian de Vere de Softley, the author of one thousand love stories, would say, was pensively leaning out of one of the office windows and thoughtfully taking pot shots at passers-by with a pea-shooter. Preferably he selected as his marks gentlemen who carried weight, and considered his best shot that which stung the ear of an elderly banker who wore a silk hat, and was detested by all who listened to his exhaustive speeches at banquets given by associations that could not afford to leave him off their programmes. The banker was exceedingly wrath, but as William was an expert in concealment, his victim was foiled in his attempts to discover the cause of the sudden stoppage of his flow of thought on his next great speech.

The banker finally passed on, and William was aiming for his next shot when something struck him on the shoulder. He turned smartly to encounter the stern gaze of a lady, an elderly lady. Her parasol was descending for another blow, but William adroitly dodged it. Nothing

daunted, she raised it again, and this time succeeded in carrying "our hero" smartly across the arm.

William dropped to the floor, crawled under the table, rose again and waited. The lady walked gravely toward him, whereupon William again followed the under-the-table route, and finally flopped into a chair by his own desk. The lady regarded these manoeuvres with a gleam of anger in her fine dark eyes.

The boy had swiftly "taken her in," to use his own expressive phrase, and afterwards was able to say that she wore a bonnet, not a hat, that long ringlets of grey hair hung down each side of her face, that her dress was of silk and black, and that she held in her hand a slender chain, to which was attached a dog of the most melancholy countenance, and a shape that made William grin.

"What are you laughing at?" demanded the lady.

"The dog; if it is a dog."

"And a very good dog it is too."

"Well, I've seen pictures of 'em," said William politely, "but I ain't never believed it till now."

"Believed what?"

"The face and the shape——"

"There's nothing the matter with the shape," was the tart response; "Dick's a Daschund."

"A what! Oh! Gee! Say, my tongue always rolls around like it had no roots when I strike a word like that."

"No wonder; a boy of your age should be at school."

"School! not for mine, lady. I've gotter make a livin'."

"A living—you! What are you doing here?"

"I'm the office boy."

"Office boy! Whose office boy?"

"Mister Whimple's."

"You're a liar," the words were snapped out with a force and directness that William afterwards declared put him "on the blinks" for a few seconds.

The only retort that he would have made to one of his own sex rose swiftly to the boyish lips, and stayed there. He rose—who shall say what freak of imagination swayed him then—and took a step toward the lady. His hand went to his cap—in the encounter he had forgotten it until then—and off it came with a

sweeping bow. He was no longer William, or Willie, or Bill; he was no longer an office boy; this was not Toronto. Here was the lady of the castle, proud, imperious, haughty; he was one who served under the banner of her lord. Beyond, was the great old house, surrounded with stately trees and fine driveways, and Sir William Adolphus Turnpike, in a voice he did not know, was saying, "Fair lady, I am thine to command. If I have offended I prithee forgive; 'twas not my intent, I do assure thee."

And the lady—what half-forgotten dreams came surging to her mind. Long ago, so long ago, there had been a boy with a heart of gold that had lost none of its admiration for her when the boy gave place to the man. But on a far-off border line of the empire he had given his life for the flag, and out of her life there had gone the dreams of a future with him. All through the years since then she had held her heart against those who would have stormed it, and now—and now—she tried to speak, but her lips were tremulous and her eyes tear-dimmed. She courtesied low and with grace, and William, who was standing with the ink-stained fingers of one hand clutching his cap and the other

held where he thought his heart might be, felt a thrill of sympathy.

"Lady," he said softly, "I await your command."

And still she did not speak. Then William, true knight, threw down his cap, placed a chair for her, carefully laid her parasol on his desk, and waited.

Presently, "Boy," she said gently, "where did you learn that?"

"I read it somewhere," he said, "some of it, and I guess I just made up the rest. I can't help it, lady. I often have them kinder spells."

She was looking at him thoughtfully, and William blushed under her scrutiny.

"Don't be ashamed, boy," she said. "'Them kinder spells'"—and she mimicked him so well that William laughed outright, "will carry you a long way some day. You may sit down."

William sat, and thereupon Dick, his mistress having loosened her hold upon the chain, ambled over and placed his solemn-faced visage as close to the boy's knees as he could get it. William lifted the dog which snuggled close to his breast.

"If Dick likes you there must be some good

in you," said the lady: and her voice was again sharp and firm. "Where's Whimple?"

"He'll be here soon, I expect."

"Umph! Poking around the law courts I suppose. He's never been here when I want him."

"Mister Whimple is a busy man," said William loyally.

"Don't lie to me," was the sharp rejoinder, "I'm a Whimple. Miss Elizabeth Whimple, if you want to know, and I'm his aunt. He would be a fool and enter law against my advice, and I hope he'll starve for it."

William's eyes narrowed. "Did you ever try starving, Miss Whimple?" he demanded.

"Heavens, no!—what would I want to try that for?"

"Well, I'm glad if you never have to," was the answer. "My Dad came near to it sometimes before he got onter his feet, and I ain't very old myself, but I've seen the day I'd walked a long way to get my teeth into a piece of beef-steak."

"I don't believe you."

"Well, of course, you don't have to," said William calmly. "That's a funny thing about grown-ups. They'll believe any old lie if it's

in print, but the minute anybody tells 'em the truth straight outen his heart, they don't——"

"Boy," she interrupted sharply, "don't preach to me!"

"Preach! me preach!"

"Yes; you may not call it that, but it's preaching just the same. Now, where's Whimple?"

"Honest, lady, I don't know. He——"

And here Whimple entered by the back door. For collectors were beginning at this time to come in with requests for payments of the monthly bills incidental to the upkeep of an office, and it was the part of wisdom to ascertain before entering the office whether any such were "at anchor."

His aunt greeted him with a fair amount of cheerfulness, and at once informed him that she had come to ask that he look after the interests of her estate.

"I've been acting as my own rent collector for years," she said, "and I'm getting tired of it. I want you to look after that and after any legal business arising therefrom, but mind you I'll pay you only the legal rate, no more, relative or no relative."

They passed into Whimple's room, whence the

lady emerged some time later. William opened the office door for her, and as she passed out she admonished him to make good use of his time, and "never, never enter law."

"I'm about as near to it as I'll ever get," answered William politely.

CHAPTER V

THIS is a chronicle of facts, culled from the life of William Adolphus Turnpike and other personages, as distinguished from mere history. Everybody in this age of research and cheap books, to say nothing of magazines and newspapers, knows that history is not true. It is established beyond doubt, for instance, that King Richard III. was a man of loving disposition, and that the story of his being an accessory to the death of the little princes has no foundation. We know also that the Scots deliberately planned the loss of the battle of Flodden in order to pave the way for their modern invasion of England and the capture of all the good jobs in the empire. They simply lured the English on, because they knew that no Englishman could live north of the Tweed and ever get enough to eat, while every Scotsman is impervious to stomachic or climatic conditions so long as there is a position to be filled or a bawbee to be paid out.

Here then, sticking to facts, is to be recorded that William Adolphus Turnpike reached the

office one Monday morning, some time after the events last chronicled, wearing a black eye, an abraded nose, and a scratched chin. Naturally, Lucien Torrance, office boy to Simmons, the architect, and therefore on terms of equality with William, demanded an immediate and detailed explanation, which William proceeded to give.

"Did yer see the lacrosse match between the Easts and the Stars on Saturday?"

"What! yer didn't? Gee! you missed it. Say, there was somethin' doing nearly every minute till the police broke up the game and took the players to the Number 4 Station.

"What's that—did I take the kiddies? Not for a minute I didn't. Would yer wantter take your little brothers or sisters—"

"You ain't got none. Well, nobody's blamin' you, are they? I'm just supposin' you had. Would you wantter take 'em any place you'd thought there was goin' to be a scrap? Not much you wouldn't. I seen them teams play once before when I was a kid."

"What! Well, I like that. Fourteen last birthday, and I'm taking nothin' from any feller my age around these parts and don't you forget

it, or I might forget I promised me mother I'd try not to fight for one day.

"Well, anyway I piked off alone to the flats to see the game, and, say, there was about half a millyun people there.

"What's that! There ain't half a millyun in the whole city of Toronto? You'd be a peach of a booster for this town, wouldn't you? Suppose there ain't, it sounds good anyway. Besides, you know very well I'm just trying to give you some idea about the size of the mo'. And say, maybe there wasn't some tough mugs there neither. Uh!

"Well, the referee he gives the teams a talking to about keeping the nation-al game clean and free from disgrace. 'The first man,' he says, 'that forgets he's playing lacrosse and begins laying the hickory on anybody,' he says, 'll get a good long penalty.'

"Then Alderman McWhirter takes a whirl at 'em; him with the spongy whiskers on each side of his face, and a jaw like the vestibul of a street car.

"Vestibool, is it? Where did ye learn French? You muster lived in Montreal.

"You never? Well, hold your hair on; hold

your hair on. Kinder soured on your food, ain't yer? What d'ye eat for breakfast anyway? Malted soapsuds, chipped mule fritters, er any o' them fancy foods?

"Porridge! my, but you're away behind the times. Wake up, man, wake up, the fast express is tearin' down the track and——

"All right. I'll proceed. So McWhirter gives the bunch a speil a mile long and would be going yet, but somebody calls out to him to dry up, an' he gets red in the face and dries up, and the game starts.

"For about one minute they played like Sunday school was a joy to them, and then the Easts bangs the ball into the net and the goal umpire he ups with his hand, meanin' a goal and——

"What's that? You know that means a goal, eh! Feeling pretty pert this morning, eh! Mebbe you'd like to go on an' tell the story to yourself.

"Oh! all right, all right. Well, anyway, up goes the goal umpire's hand for a goal, and down goes the umpire for the count, for Tip Doolen of the Stars cracks him a wallop on his brain factory you could hear a mile away. And

all the Easts piles on to Tip and it took the police fifteen minutes to get 'em untied. And the police sergeant he says, it's Tip to the station, but the goal umpire wakes up and says he wouldn't lodge no complaint, for Tip and him's friendly, only would they please get a new goal umpire, he says, and they did.

"Then the police sergeant wouldn't let 'em go on playing till he'd had a little say, and you'd oughter heard it. He says, 'It looks to me like most er you fellers is spoilin' for a clubbin', and I'd hate,' he says, 'to disappoint you if that's the case. But I'm willing to stay on duty a few hours beyond me time,' he says, 'in order to please you.'

"And the fellers swear they're ready to go on with the game and play like kinder-gart'ners. So the sergeant says, 'Let her go,' he says.

"So it went all right for quite a while and there wasn't much doin' except the noise, for both sides had big gangs there and you cert'nly could hear 'em.

"At the end of the second quarter it was a tie—two goals each, and not more'n half the players on the mourners' bench.

"What! You don't know what the mourners'

bench is? Say, if you'd only study the English language 'stead of loading your think tank with them furrin' words you wouldn't need nobody to tell you that the mourners' bench is just another name for the penalty bench.

"But when the third quarter gets nicely started! Well, say, the referee he puts one of the Easts off the field for trippin', and another one of the Easts he swings his stick on the referee's slats for all he's worth, an' the referee just has time to kick him in the shins before a third feller gives the referee a biff under the ear and lays him out. About half the people made a mad rush for the Easts and the other half rushes for the Stars, and there's only six policemen there. But the sergeant—say, my Pa knows him well—he's the wise guy. He lets 'em all get going and you couldn't see anything but people shovin' and crowdin' and hittin'. And then he chases for the caretaker of the park where the flats are an' gets two lines of hose fixed on a hydrant and two cops a holdin' the hose. And pretty soon two streams er water hits the crowd, and you'd oughter have seen the way it bust up. Honest, I never thought there was so many fast runners in the whole

of Canada. And when the most of the people is outter the way, here's nearly all the Easts and the Stars a rolling around on the ground tearin' each other to pieces. The water never fizzed on 'em. And the police sergeant—my Pa says he's a strat-eg-ist—he says, 'It's just adding fuel to the flames,' he says, 'to put water on 'em,' and looks round, and I did too, and sees the patrol wagon coming along with more cops in it. Them lacrosse fellers is just attendin' strictly to business same as if there wasn't anybody in the whole province of Ontario but them. And then the cops waded right in and clubbed them fellers good and plenty, and——

"That's what I'm coming to, if you'd only keep the brakes on your forty horse power tongue a minute.

"Yes, sir, they squeezed the whole shooting match into the wagon and took 'em to the station.

"Sure they gave 'em bail that night, and soaked 'em five and costs apiece in the court Monday morning. And I was telling my Pa about it, and I says to him, 'Now,' I says, 'in a case like that, Pa, who wins?' Of course I meant the game.

"And my Pa says to me, he says, 'Well,' he says, 'it looks to me like a draw,' he says, 'with first-class honors,' he says, 'to Sergeant Mackay and second place to the magistrate,' he says. And he never bats an eyelid when he says it. I tell you it's a pretty wise guy that can put one over on my Pa.

"What's that gotter do with my face! Gee, but you oughter to be in the law—you'd be the peach of a cross-exam'ner you would. But just so's to have no hard feelin's I'll tell you. I'm an East-ender myself, and I made some noise too. One of the Star rooters got kinder mad at me making a few remarks during the game, and when the mix-up starts I'm laying for him. But he seen me comin' and I couldn't dodge the brick he had. It's all right to pipe off about fighting square and fair, but that guy wasn't lettin' his brick go to waste till he could think up a motter. Not for him. He did just what I would have done if I'd seen that brick first."

But when Whimple asked for the cause of the battered visage, William merely answered that he had collided with a brick.

"Was the brick hurt any?"

"Well, not so's you'd notice it," retorted William smilingly.

"Um! It's rather unfortunate that it was such a hard object—for you, I mean," said Whimple. "You see I had intended to start you collecting rents to-day."

"Me!"

"Yes. Miss Whimple, my boy, is the possessor of some twenty houses; four of them in your district, William, to say nothing of some choice lots that are increasing in value every month. She's a wonderful woman, boy; her dad left her four houses to begin with, and she's done the rest. If I had her business ability, William, I'd be on the fair way to being wealthy now."

"But, Mister Whimple, my face won't matter. Like as not it'll give me a chance to talk to the people and find out whether they're good tenants or not. Let me try it, sir."

"All right. One of the tenants down your way owes two months' rent now, and in the other cases the rents are due to-day. Here are the addresses. You look after these four tenants every month; I'll take care of the others."

And forthwith William Adolphus Turnpike set out, as he expressed it to Lucien Torrance,

"to round up some coin for Mister Whimple's aunt." He was proud of the trust imposed in him, and could not forbear a parting shot at Lucien.

"You're gotter stay here," he said importantly, "and answer fool questions when people call. But it's me to the front, Lucien Torrance, on a man's job."

CHAPTER VI

WILLIAM was an unconscious diplomat. His business career had already been marked by the devotion of much time to the consideration of the easiest methods of dealing with problems as they presented themselves from time to time, though not always with success, and his first perusal of the list of tenants handed him by Whimple showed him that the job of rent collecting would be no sinecure. He knew his own district very well; the work and conditions, the family life, and many other details of a more or less intimate nature, were matters of knowledge to him. He read the list over again as he turned down a street to make his first call, and then passed the first house on his list, and kept right on until he came to Jimmy Duggan's coal and wood yard. Jimmy was located in his office, a wooden shack with a tin roof, where he was laboriously engaged in the monthly task of straightening out his books. To him William confided the errand entrusted to him, and over the habits and the career of the first-named tenant on the list there followed a solemn

conference. At its close, William, with a "Much obliged, Jimmy," sallied forth to the house he had passed on his way, and knocked sharply at the door. A girl, untidy, unwashed, with a face that might have been pretty if the coating of dirt upon it were removed, appeared at the bay window of the ground floor. William knew the girl and she knew William. Unabashed, he endured her calm scrutiny, banking on his belief that she would never "tumble" to his errand. She looked a long time, but finally came to the door and slowly opened it. Whereupon William promptly stepped inside.

"Is Mister Jonas in?" he asked as he closed the door behind him.

"No," she said timidly.

"Ah! gone out for a walk I suppose?" said William politely.

In the dim light of the hall she looked at him with fear in her eyes.

"He's a great walker, I believe," William went on with a tinge of sarcasm. "Out in the mornings, out in the afternoons, takes another stroll in the evenings. Does he ever go to sleep?"

She made no answer, and William, who was at least a head shorter, patted her on the shoulder.

"Cheer up," he said patronisingly, "it's all right. I've just come for the rent, that's all."

"For what?" she gasped.

"The rent; hadn't you better show me where he is right away?"

"Didn't I say he wasn't in?" she answered sharply.

"You did, my dear, but I'm willing to forget it. I believe that kinder answer goes in polite society when the lady of the house don't want to see anybody, and the lady what calls hopes that the lady she calls on ain't in. But it don't go with me."

"But he ain't in," the girl whined.

"Then he's out for the first time in three years," was the rejoinder, "and it's funny he'd pick rent day for a walk; him owing two months' rent at that. P'raps he left the money with you?"

"No."

"H'm. Then I'll wait till he comes back."

"But he won't be back until to-night."

"All the same to me. I can wait; that's part of my work."

She shifted ground uneasily, and finally burst out; "He's in the kitchen, Will Turnpike,

and you can go in yourself. He's wild to-day."

William walked solemnly through to the kitchen where Jonas was sitting by the window in a great arm-chair. A weird-looking figure he was, muffled in an old overcoat, though it was summer and the day was warm. A growth of untrimmed whiskers through which peered crafty eyes, and a mass of long matted hair topping a big head, gave an uncanny appearance to the man, who was a helpless cripple through rheumatism. He glared at William, who cordially expressed the hope that he was feeling a little better.

"Is that what she let you in for?" he demanded fiercely.

"Well, I didn't just put it to her in that way, if you mean your daughter," said William calmly. "I'm after some money, to tell you the truth."

"Money!" the old man shrieked the word.

"You heard me first time," returned William politely, "and ain't you glad your sickness don't hinder your hearing some?"

"Money!" shouted the old man again.

"Money! What do you want money from me for?"

"The rent," said William calmly—"two months, due to-day. You can read, I believe," and he held before the old man's face two receipts, properly made out for the amounts due. "I see," he said, pointing to an open letter on the window sill, "that you got Mister Whimple's note about it. I'm the collector he speaks of."

"You!"

"The same, Mister Jonas."

The man glared at him savagely, and then shouted, "You—you—get t'hades out of this."

"Sure, I'll get out as soon as I get the rent. But as for the place you speak of—not for mine. This is a good enough world for me, Mister Jonas."

The old man fumed in helpless rage. He cursed William and his family and their antecedents, cursed his daughter, cursed everybody and everything for a full five minutes, and ended up with the declaration, "I haven't got any money."

William silently regarded him for a moment, and then leaning forward a little said, very

clearly, "Well, I guess you ain't making so much as you uster when you sold light-weight coal on the big contract from the city, but I'm told on the best au-thor-ity, Mister Jonas, that you ain't ever likely to know what it means to be without money."

For a long time then they looked at each other, fear on the old man's face, William inwardly troubled, outwardly cool and unruffled. The old man broke the silence.

"Mary, Mary," he screamed, and his daughter ran to him, "pay this young ruffian two months' rent, and get the receipts from him, and if you ever let him in again—I'll—I'll kill you."

When the transaction was completed, William turned to Jonas. "I'll be here to the minute when the next rent's due," he said confidently, "and it'll be ever so much nicer for you to have it ready, else," and here he assumed what he believed to be the correct attitude for such an occasion, "I'll have to have you turned out."

Then he left, the old man hurling curses at him until the door closed.

"He's gotter great line of talk," said William to himself. "Now for Mrs. Moriarity," that

lady being the next on his list. William knew her for a good-natured, careless woman, who nevertheless was the real head of the Moriarity household, which included nine children of varying ages and sizes. Nothing was ever done on time in her house; no bill was ever paid when it was due, though Mrs. Moriarity never tried to evade one. She was just happy-go-lucky and careless.

William approached the house with some misgivings. A number of the younger Moriaritys were playing around the door, and just as William approached them a drunken man staggered up, singing loudly. He fell over one of the children, and the youngster set up a howl that brought the mother to the open door. She reached it just as the man, thrusting out a long arm, brutally flung another child on one side. With an angry cry the mother rushed for the brute, but William reached him first. Without a word the boy stooped, grabbed one of the man's ankles firmly, and, putting all his strength into the effort, pulled his foot off the ground. The man lurched heavily and fell full length upon his face, just escaping William, who stood upright, as Mrs. Moriarity, talking

volubly, plumped down on the man's back. "And here oi'll sit till a p'licemon comes," she said; "you, William Turnpike, kape a lukout for wan." And even as she said it a policeman came along and took the drunken offender into custody. As the policeman marched his prisoner away, Mrs. Moriarity turned to William, who was trying to comfort the little Moriaritys, for those who had not been hurt were crying as lustily from fear and sympathy as those who had. In the short struggle with the man William's face had received a buffet that had re-opened one of the scratches, and this was now bleeding somewhat freely.

"For the luv of heavin, Willyum, did that brute do that to you?" cried Mrs. Moriarity.

William tried to explain, but she never heard him. "It's good f'r him Moriarity wasn't here or he'd a bruk his neck," she went on excitedly. "Come on in," she ordered, "all ov yez; come on, Willyum." And William went. She comforted her offspring and bathed William's face in warm water, unheeding his protests and deaf to his explanation of the original cause of his injuries. It was only after she had made him drink a cup of tea and had

sent the children out to their play again that he was able to explain his errand.

"And you're a rint collector—a bhoy loike you! Think ov that now. Willyum, you're mother ought to be proud v yez. Sure an' oi'll pay the rint: oi'd clane forgotten this was the day, but oi've some money by me, bhoy, an' yez can have it." She escorted him to the door after the rent had been paid over, patting him on the head, calling him a hero, and telling him that "the rint wud always be rady for the loikes ov him." And at the door, in the open light of day, she flung her arms around his neck. "God bless yez, ye darlint," she said, and kissed him warmly. William blushed all over, but went on his way rejoicing. Whimple had told him that the other two tenants were always on time, and this day William found it to be so.

It was nearly six o'clock when he started back to the office, one hand holding the rents thrust deep into a pocket. Whimple, who had been growing anxious at the boy's long absence, and had been blaming himself for asking him to do the work, met him half-way to the office. "I was a little bit worried," he said simply;

"I'm afraid I made a mistake putting so much responsibility on you, William."

But when, in the inner room of the office, William laid down the money he had collected with the laconic statement, "It's kinder slow work," Whimple's misgivings fled.

"Bully for you, William," he said enthusiastically. "You're a winner. There's a new day dawning for me—and for you. I have had two new clients in to-day. You've brought me luck, boy."

And William grinned delightedly.

CHAPTER VII

For a week before the first appearance in vaudeville of "Flo Dearmore," Tommy Watson's behaviour alarmed his friends. He ate little; it was plain to those who met him daily that he slept little, and William Adolphus Turnpike confided to Whimple that Tommy was "shaping up for the asylum." "He don't know what he's sayin' half the time, and the other half he ain't sayin' anything, he's just singing Scotch songs, and Tommy's singing ain't much diff'rent to the hootin' of a factory whistle," he said earnestly.

"You sing some old country songs pretty well yourself, William."

"Pa says so, and so does Ma, but——" he paused.

"Well?"

"Well—I ain't laying out to be no singer. Tommy took me to one of them singing factories one day, and the feller what heard me says, 'Well,' he says, 'he has a sweet enough voice, but that's about all for him.'"

"That was encouraging though."

"But I ain't hankering to get my living by singing. Anyway, that's not worrying me now—it's Tommy. Mister Epstein says he can guess, but he won't tell."

"Guess what's troubling Tommy?"

"Yes—and I wish I did. Maybe I could help—if I am only a boy."

"Well, we'll have to go slowly, William; it won't do to intrude on a man's private affairs."

"That's what Jimmy Duggan said when he laid out the burglar what was crackin' his safe in the coal yard office; only this is diff'rent; nobody ain't swipin' Tommy's money. I asked him and he says to me, 'Willyum, you know what our old friend Bill Shakespeare says.' And I says, 'What?' 'Well,' he says, 'Bill has a few lines to say it don't matter much who swipes me purse, it's what hits me heart that counts.'"

"Um—well, that may be Tommy's version of it: Shakespeare's was somewhat different."

There the conversation dropped. Whimple thought no more about it until the following Monday night when he received from Epstein an invitation to go to the Variety with him.

He met the old comedian at the door of the theatre, and found Watson and William with him. They had seats in the front row of the balcony. Epstein and Whimple sat together, Watson next to the barrister, and William next to Watson. It was a fair bill as vaudeville bills go, with Flo Dearmore about half-way down on the programme. Whimple noticed that Watson paid no heed to the various turns, though William was revelling in them. But when Flo Dearmore's number went up he saw Watson lean forward with his arms on the rail in front of him, and even in the vague light of the semi-darkened theatre he noticed that his face was pale and drawn. The very simplicity of "the turn" constituted one of its greatest charms. Flo came on the stage and sang in a pure contralto voice several old country songs. A pretty woman she was, not tall, but gracefully formed, with dark blue eyes and a wealth of black hair, crowning a well-shaped head. She was a remarkably expressive singer—you saw the scenes of her songs as clearly as though you were wandering through them with Flo by your side. The applause was heartier with every song; it grew into an outburst of cheering

when she sang "Come Back to Erin:" and at its close bowed and smiled her acknowledgments. She would have left the stage then, but the audience would not have it. Again and again she advanced and bowed her thanks, and again and again the cheering rolled out. Finally the lights went up, once more she stepped to the front of the stage, nodded to the orchestra leader, who waved his baton, and began "Loch Lomond." Sweet and clear the voice rose and fell; they cheered after the first verse; they cheered again at the close of the second; and then—she saw Tommy Watson, who was staring straight at her, his face brighter now, his eyes aflame, his lips slightly parted. What was it that brought the tears to her eyes; that made her falter and sway a little, and then stand silent and helpless while the orchestra twice started the air for the third verse, and the audience begin to grow restless?

The stage manager, alarmed and worried, was about to ring down the curtain when, from the balcony, a clear boyish voice took up the song. All eyes were turned in that direction. Flo Dearmore herself flung out her hands as though urging the people to listen and the

orchestra to play on. Whimble started from his seat and then sat down again on Epstein's sharp "Leave him alone," and William, looking down on the stage, unconscious of anything but the vision of helpless loveliness there, sang in his sweet boyish voice:—

"The wild flowers spring, and the wee birdies sing,
And in sunshine the waters are gleaming,
But the broken heart, it kens nae second spring,
Though the wae'ful may cease frae their greetin'."

She joined him then in the refrain, both keeping perfect time:—

"Oh! you'll tak' the high road and I'll tak' the low road,
And I'll be in Scotland afore ye,
But me an' my true love will never meet again,
On the bonnie, bonnie banks o' Loch Lomond."

There followed a scene the like of which the Variety had never witnessed. For long minutes the applause and cheering echoed and re-echoed through the theatre. Everybody told everybody else what a clever act it was; but they had been "on to it" from the first. Scores of people confided to other scores that they had noticed the lad come into the theatre and take the seat reserved for him. They wondered

how old he was; if he was "her brother," and between times they hoped that there would be a repeat.

But as a "repeater" William would not have been a success. He was trembling and almost hysterical when he sat down, and Tommy Watson was in almost as bad a condition. Whimple was uneasy; Epstein only seemed to be cool. He passed the word along, and, as the curtain went up for the next act, the four friends quietly left their seats and walked down the stairs into the main entrance of the theatre. Here they were met by the manager, who seized Epstein by the arm. "Say, 'Chuck,'" he said excitedly, "that was a great stunt. How much will the kid take for the week?"

Epstein smiled and turned to William. "I wouldn't do it again for a hundred dollars a night," said William pointedly, "and I don't know what I did it for anyway."

"But, see here, my boy," said the manager, "there's big money in it for you—say——"

William, however, was already at the door, and Whimple, not wholly understanding what lay behind Epstein's murmured, "Sorry—but I'll have to explain later," followed him.

The manager was talking now to Tommy. "Flo Dearmore wants to see you, Mr. Watson," he said. "Do you know her?"

Tommy nodded. "Come along then—you coming too, Epstein?"

"No." The old comedian smiled affectionately on Tommy as the latter went off with the manager, and then walked away slowly, his lips moving as though he was communing with himself.

At the door of the dressing-room the manager left Tommy, who knocked gently. The door was opened at once by a coloured maid of uncertain age, who turned to her mistress at the sight of Tommy. "It's a gent, honey," she said, and Flo, who was already in street attire, turned to the door. "Come in, Tommy Watson," she said quietly. "Toots," to the maid, "leave us a little while."

Tommy stood near the door, his eyes sparkling, his cheeks full of colour now, his hands rigid by his side. Flo waited, her own cheeks burning, her heart beating fast. Tommy came a little nearer to her, and, "It seems like a long, long time since you went on the stage, Flo Dearmore," he said.

She nodded, and recovering a little of her dashing self, answered, "It's only ten years, Tommy."

"No," said Tommy, "it's more than that—it's all of twenty."

"Tommy!"

"I'm forty and you're thirty—think of that, Flo, and you were ten the first time I saw you on the stage. Don't you remember the pantomime in the old schoolhouse? You were the Queen of the Fairies, and——"

"Yes, but I was still a school-girl."

"And your heart was already set upon the stage. I've never forgotten that night, Flo; such a winsome little fairy you were."

"But—but——" she faltered.

"I did—I tell you," he asserted stoutly, as though she had contradicted him—"I fell in love with you that night; I watched you grow into young womanhood, Flo; and always—and always—you filled my heart."

"Don't, Tommy."

"And when I asked you—and when you laughed——" he broke off abruptly.

"Don't," she pleaded—"don't, Tommy. It was cruel of me——"

He came nearer still—his arms outstretched now. She rose with a swift, "No, no, Tommy, I cannot—not yet—wait a little longer—give me a little time," and there was a note of appeal in her voice. She went on rapidly. "I must feel that I can give you all that you would have, Tommy. There is no other man—believe me—and my work—my work—well, it is not all now. There are times when—" and again she halted. Then looking at him bravely, she said, "Tommy, if you are of the same mind at the end of the season, and there is no other woman," this with a gleam of mischief in her eyes, "perhaps I'll know for sure."

And Tommy, the silver-tongued auctioneer, the man whose eloquence opened people's pockets and made them buy bargains they didn't want, meekly accepted her rebuff when she refused even to allow him to kiss her hand, and left her when she said, "It must be good-night, Tommy, now."

The next morning the newspapers with one accord paid tribute to the cleverness of the Loch Lomond scene in "Flo Dearmore's turn," and at every remaining performance it was repeated. But William had no part in it. A

choir boy from a city church got "the big money" the manager had talked of. And Tommy Watson, who attended every performance during the week for just so long as Flo Dearmore's act lasted, began to eat like a man who had many slim meals to make up for.

CHAPTER VIII

THE truth as to William's turn at the Variety having gradually become known among his friends, he assumed, in the opinion of various of his youthful associates, an importance not hitherto felt for him, and this manifested itself in the form of an invitation to take part in "Uncle Tom's Cabin," to be presented by the Berkeley Junior Dramatic Society. William's eager consent was somewhat dampened when he was informed by the young and ambitious manager of the production that he would have to take the part of a small coloured boy and that there were no lines for him—particularly. "You'll just come in kind of incidental," said the manager—who was not much older than William—"and sing a piece."

"Not much. No singing for mine."

"Pshaw! It'll be dead easy, and I bet it'll make a hit too. You know the stunt—lights down—spotlight on the stage—you in it singing in a low sweet voice 'Loch Lomond.'"

"What!"

"Sure thing."

"What in Sam Hill has 'Loch Lomond' gotter do with 'Uncle Tom's Cabin!'" demanded William truculently. "Them niggers never even heard of it, I'll bet."

"Well, this ain't no ordinary Uncle Tom's show, let me tell you that," retorted the manager. "We've doctored it up quite a bit. It's too slow for our bunch the way it is put on by most companies."

"But 'Loch Lomond' in a nigger show! Gee! you're crazy. Next thing I know you'll want me to wear kilts."

"I never thought of that," said the manager thoughtfully; "but, say, that would be an elegant stunt. Let's do it."

"Not with my legs," said William. "Didger ever see 'em? They're about as fat as fishing rods."

"All the better. It'll bring the house down, I tell you."

"Well, I don't want any house falling on me the way that'll be liable to when it sees me in kilts and me face black—'oh! mother, mother, mother, pin some clothes on me,'" he concluded sarcastically. But in the end William was won over, and he entered into the rehearsals with a whole-hearted determination that gladdened the

manager's heart, and made half of the rest of the cast jealous.

You who discriminate in the choice of plays; who talk learnedly of the art of Irving, Mansfield, Forbes Robertson, and Miller; you should have seen that presentation given to a packed house. There were all of three hundred people in the Berkeley Junior Dramatic Society's club house that night, and every one of them parted with coin of the realm to the amount of one quarter of a dollar for admission, and never a one complained that he or she didn't get all of it back in real value.

The scenery and all accessories, including the costumes, were home-made. Who can value the loving care and thoughtfulness that mothers and sisters put into every stitch of those costumes; with what interest they studied the play, as "doctored," in order that the garments might be historically correct? And who shall fittingly describe William's kilts, as made by Mrs. Turnpike from a Scottish shawl? William appeared in the first scene, without having anything to say, but the costume spoke for him. There was a shout of laughter as he walked across the stage for the first time, to be renewed

when a shrill voice invited all and sundry to "pipe them legs." The audience piped them—they were encased in black stockings—and laughed again, whereupon William advanced to the front and, pointing an accusing finger in the direction of the original "piper," shouted, "I'm on to you, Tom Edwards: everybody knows you're so bow-legged you wouldn't dare wear anything but long pants." It took the audience some time to recover its equilibrium, but eventually the play proceeded to the scene where Eliza made the perilous trip across the floating ice.

Eliza, a buxom girl with a heavy tread, carrying a large rag doll, made the flight very slowly. She didn't trust "them cakes of ice," knowing full well that packing cases, however stoutly built, and however ably disguised in white cheese cloth, were parlous things for a lady of her weight. The prompter urged her in an audible voice to get a move on, to which she retorted sharply, "Shut up, I ain't going to break any of my legs for fun."

But when the baying of the bloodhounds, faithfully imitated by the entire company, only partially concealed in the wings, was joined by the barking of the real live dog in the show,

she began to move a little faster. She moved faster still when the real dog, a fair-sized animal of uncertain breed, wearing a stout muzzle, broke away from the "crool slave masters" and dashed towards her, and just as she lit on the last cake of ice it gave way. The excited and hilarious applause of the audience, together with Eliza's frantic screams, struck panic to the heart of the already frightened dog, which, turning towards the foot-lights, made a flying leap into the audience. Fortunately it landed on the stout knees of William's Pa, and that worthy, firmly grasping it by the neck, and thus effectually stopping its barking, carried it to the main door and threw it into the street. Whereupon the scene proceeded, the stage carpenter and his staff of one having meanwhile extricated Eliza from the cake of ice and started her on the concluding portion of her journey to safety. It was then that William, burning to distinguish himself, and having a vague notion that "Chuck" Epstein, who was in the audience, had once declared that the actor who could interpolate telling lines in his part was on a fair way to fame, advanced solemnly to the front, regardless of the dropping curtain

which landed on his shoulders and flopped ungracefully around him, to declare in his loudest voice, "And I wish to say, that the man what hits a woman is a coward." William and the curtain were somehow parted by the now irate manager, but the audience insisted on the "nigger kiltie" returning to the front, while they gave him another hearty round of applause.

A lecture behind the curtain, in which the manager, the stage carpenter, Eliza and Legree, and Uncle Tom combined, seared William's soul to the centre, though he said not a word, and the play went on.

The death-bed scene, described in the home-made programmes as the "grand finally," included the appearance of "the sweet boy singer, William Adolphus Turnpike, in 'Loch Lomond.'" Little Eva was dying beautifully when the pianist, who was not at all merciful to the uncertain age and still more uncertain tone of his instrument, began the air. William, who was one of the group around the bed, advanced and began to sing. The audience ceased its snickering after the first few words to listen intently. To many it was a beloved song; they could forget the incongruous sur-

roundings in the sweet memories it recalled, and to others it appealed, as many old-world songs do, by its plaintive sweetness. William was making a hit, and he knew it. Boy though he was, he felt to the full the bond of sympathy between himself and the audience. There was a queer sensation in his heart as he began the last verse, and he wondered if he could finish it. He had reached the second line when the voice of the prompter, imploringly pitched, begged him to "hurry it up; little Eva's bed's a falling down." William turned sharply toward the bed and, as he turned, something gave way at his waist. He rushed to the death-bed, snatched therefrom the coverlet, wrapped it majestically around him, and walked off the stage, leaving behind him a little plaid heap—the kilts. The curtain dropped suddenly in response to the manager's frantic signals. Little Eva, the boy who had also taken the part of Legree, jumped from the bed hysterically crying, "You spoiled me part," grappled madly with the manager, and while the battle raged, William Adolphus Turnpike, coverlet and all, slipped quietly out of the back door and raced frantically for home, only two short blocks away.

CHAPTER IX

"WHEN I feel gloomy, I'm good and gloomy," said William to Lucien Torrance one sunshiny afternoon in June, as they sat together in Whimple's office, their respective "bosses" being out "on business," another way of saying that they had gone to the baseball match.

"This is one day when I'm gloomy, and I just gotter gloom—it ain't no good your buttin' in and telling me to cheer up and all that kinder rot. No, sir, I just gotter gloom till it's all over."

"What have you got to 'gloom' for to-day?" ventured Lucien, "it's a bright, cheery day; the sun is——"

"The sun might be the moon for all I care," interrupted William impatiently. "I got up gloomy, and likely as not I'll go to bed gloomy. Gee! this is a rotten world sometimes."

"Maybe you're ill," suggested Lucien.

"Ill nothing—don't you ever feel gloomy?"

"Not without good cause."

"Well, I'd just hate to be you. Sometimes a song, or somebody humming a tune, sets me gloomin', or something I read, or sometimes it

ain't nothing at all that I could tell. It just comes and sticks around till I don't know whether I'd sooner be a gloomer or a merry-ha-ha feller, with a smile for everybody and everything. I uster get that way in school sometimes, and I hated school bad enough, except the play time, but I sometimes wish I was back again."

"Why?"

"How the dickens do I know? Don't you?"

"No—I've made up my mind to a business career, and——"

William broke in again. "Well, you cert'nly have your mind well trained. If I had a mind like that, I'd take it out and dump it into the Bay every once in a while."

"How could I do that? I'd have to commit suicide."

"Well, you're a living suicide anyway, with a mind like yours," said William. "It's too regular, that's what it is."

They sat silent for a long time. Lucien was afraid to speak, and William was just "glooming." He turned to his comrade at last, and began, "Say, whenever I get the gloom on me, sooner or later I get to thinkin' about the first day

Pete went to school. That was two years ago—and he's nine now, and maybe he don't like school. Say, he'd go without a meal rather'n be late. He's got that medal bug in his brain pan; you know the game, never late and good conduct for about seventeen years, and you get a medal that's pretty to look at and no darn good to help you get a job. There's one good thing about Pete though, even if he is a kid." He paused.

"What is it?"

"He can fight. Say, Lucien, you'd oughter see him at it. Why, last week he had three fights with one feller."

"What for?"

"Well, the guy licked him the first two times, and didn't know any better than to go around and beef about it. So Pete tackled him again and licked him good and plenty, and every day since then Pete asks him does he wanter fight again, and he says, 'No.' That's the way with some folks, they know when they've had enough, but Pete never does; he just stays with it till he wins out, then he looks for another fight. But he's cunning, Pete is, he don't fight around the school none—Pete wants that medal.

"But I was going to tell you about the first day he went to school. One morning Pa says to Ma, 'Well, what about Pete starting school?' he says.

"And Ma gets kinder white and her lips is trembly, and she says, 'I guess he'll have to go,' and she says to Pete, 'Do you wanter go to school, Pete?' and Pete says he's crazy to go.

"So Pa says to me, 'You'd better take him along, Willyum, I guess there's no need for me to go tottin' up there.'

"But Ma says to Pa, 'I'd kinder like you to take him, Joe, the first day,' she says, 'and I'll go and meet him at noon,' she says.

"And you bet Pa does what Ma asks him, he's that set on her. So Pa takes him, and I seen Ma crying when they starts, so I pikes out after 'em quick, for it makes me feel kinder queer to see Ma and Pa feeling bad about anything.

"Pa goes to the principal, and he asks Pete the same old fool things they ask every boy and girl what goes to school, and finds out Pete can read and write some, so he sticks him in the first form, and, of course, it's a lady teacher.

She bends down and pats Pete on the head—he's gotter great mop of curls—and says, 'Well, my little man,' she says, 'I hope you'll be a good scholar.' 'Sure,' says Pete, 'anything to oblige a lady.' So she laughs and says, 'What did you say your full name was?' And Pete shuffles around some, and then he says, 'Peter Cornelius Turnpike,' he says.

"Well, that set some of the kids a snickerin'; and one of 'em, a boy about Pete's size, says, 'Gee! what a name.' Pete walks over to him and says, 'My Ma likes it, and anything she likes goes, see,' and with that he pastes the kid one in the eye, and right there they goes for each other fierce.

"Sure the teacher stopped 'em. Didjer ever know a woman that wouldn't stop boys fightin' or get somebody to stop 'em? She stops 'em all right, and keeps Pete in after school to give him a spiel about being good and a credit to the school and his Ma and Pa, and right there she plants the idea in Pete about getting a medal.

"When I gets out after school there's no Pete, so I ask some of the kids, and they says the teacher's talking to him. I waited around,

and all of a sudden I sees Ma coming along, and I'm just going to speak to her when along comes Pa. He lets on he's just coming that way on account of business, but his face gets a kinder red, and Ma laughs a glad little laugh. And when I told 'em about Pete being kept in, they both looks awful solemn and plunks down on the steps to wait for him. Pa, he takes one'r Ma's hands and tells her to cheer up, and Ma says she can't, she feels gloomy, and the house was awful lonesome with both the boys away. So, just when I think there's going to be a crying match, out comes Pete with his face a shining. Ma grabbed him and kissed him like she'd never stop, and Pa hoists him on his should'er, and the procesh starts for home.

"Well, both Ma and Pa were for Pete staying home that afternoon, but not for Pete. He was crazy for school. He told 'em what he'd done, and Pa laughs and Ma tells him he'd orter be ashamed to laugh at his boy fightin' the first day he's at school. But Pa laughs some more and says, 'It ain't a bad sign,' he says; 'they gotter fight some time or other, and there's nothing like starting early,' he says.

"So Pete and me goes off to school in the

afternoon, and Pa says to Ma, 'Keep a stiff upper lip, Ma, the boys are all right,' he says, and I guess Pa knows.

"There's quite a bunch in our family now, and some of 'em ain't old enough for school yet, and I s'pose Ma 'll feel gloomy about 'em when they start, same as she did about Pete."

He rose, put on his cap, and informed Lucien that he was going to look at the bulletin boards to see how the baseball team was doing. "I hope they'll lose," he added.

"Why?" Lucien demanded.

"Well, they've lost three games in a row now to the tail enders, and if they lose this one it'll make me gloomier'n ever, and maybe I'll be so gloomy there'll be no sense in it, and I'll begin to cheer up."

CHAPTER X

It was Miss Whimple who heard the first detailed account of William's experiences as a rent collector, and she heard it from William's own lips. She sent a note to the office one day, asking Whimple to send the lad up, ostensibly with some papers, "but in reality," she added, "because I want him to take luncheon with me; I want to ask him about some things."

"And if she wants to ask him she'll ask him, all right," Whimple mused to himself, "and William 'll have to answer, for Aunt is a remarkably bright woman, and a remarkably direct woman, too."

To William he said, "You'll take these papers up to Miss Whimple, and you'll take luncheon with her at her house——"

"I'll—I'll—what's that?"

"Take luncheon with her."

"Gee!" said William, and then—"Say, honest, Mister Whimple, has she gotter bunch of servants?"

"No—only two."

"A butler?"

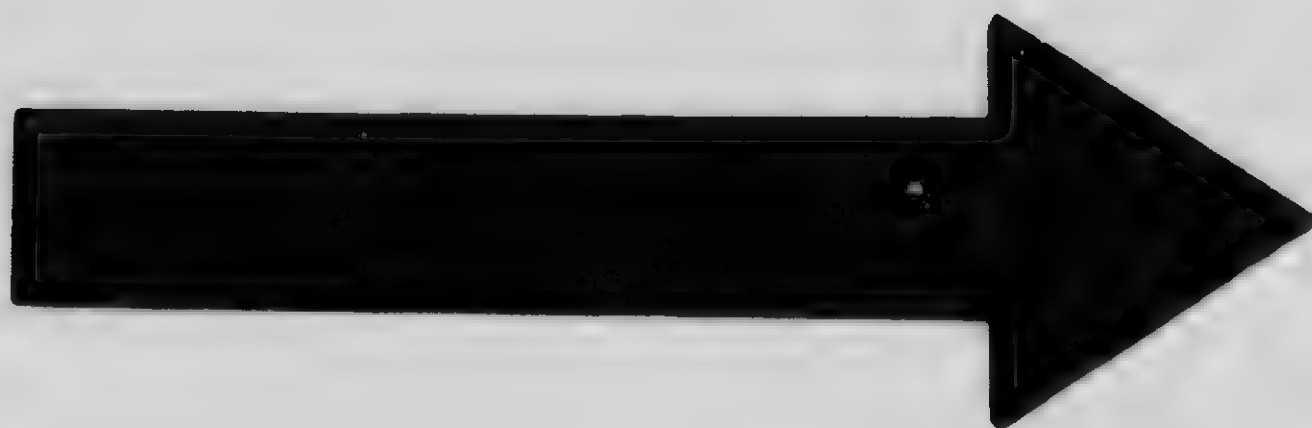
"No—no, a maid, and a man who looks after the grounds and the horse and that kind of work."

"Gosh, I'm glad of that. The idea of me eatin' with rich folks with one of them solemn butlers that you read about standing behind me chair—why, honest, I'd choke to death on the first bite."

Leaving Whimple, William marched into Simmons' office and demanded of Lucien Torrance, "Have you gotter clean han'kerchief?"

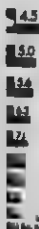
Lucien said he had, and produced one in proof of his assertion. William snatched it from him; seized the jug of ice water, the common property of the occupants, soused one corner of the handkerchief, and calmly, but vigorously, wiped his face with it, using the unwetted portion to dry his visage. Lucien's protests had no effect on William.

"Don't get mad, Lucien," he said soothingly. "I'm invited out to eat with a lady. I gotter keep my own han'kerchief clean, and you wouldn't like me to go with a dirty face, I know. Just hang it outer the window and it'll be dry in a minute," and thereupon he departed.



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Miss Whimple lived a considerable distance beyond the then city limits. She occupied what had once been a farm-house, solidly built, and surrounded by several acres of laud, including a small but excellent orchard. She owned a good deal of land in the neighbourhood, now one of Toronto's finest residential districts.

As William turned into the driveway leading to the front entrance, he was hailed by a man who was cutting the grass around one of the flower beds. "What'll you be wantin', laddie?" said the grass-cutter.

"To see Miss Whimple," answered William readily.

"And what for?"

William eyed the questioner, and with a gleam of mischief in his eyes, replied quietly, "On business."

"Aye—business, they'll all be saying that. She'll no see ye, ma lad, so you better be tellin' me, and maybe I'll be able to tell ye the way to be goin' about it."

"What part of Scotland did you come from?" asked William sweetly. The man glowered at him—the boy went on, "You could never deny

you came from Scotland, the thistles is just stickin' out on you in bunches."

"You're a verra cheeky young——" began the man, but William cut him short with, "Save your breath, Scotty, I know more about myself than you can ever guess." And then changing his tone, he asked sharply, "Do you own this place?"

"Miss Whimple is the owner, young man, and I'm thinking——"

"Don't—don't get to thinkin'. It'll stop the grass-cutting if you do; but seeing that you don't own the place I guess it's no good asking you what you'll take for it——"

"Ye young——" began the man, but whatever else he might have said he kept to himself, for at that moment a woman appeared at the front entrance of the house and called, "John, ye'll be leaving the laddie alone—Miss Whimple's expectin' him."

William walked up to the woman, lifted his cap, and asked in his best manner, "That gentleman back there a relative of yours?" She smiled at the audacity of it perhaps, but answered, "Aye, the gowk's marrit till me, but I'm sometimes feared I made a mistake takin'

peety on him. Will ye come in—if your name happens to be Tur'r'npike."

"Well, it's something like that," answered William cordially as he stepped inside, "but it don't often get so many 'r's' slung into it."

Miss Whimple appeared in the hallway and extended a hand to William, who squeezed it heartily and hoped the lady was well. She was, she said.

"Well, I'm glad to hear it," said William.

"Umph—it doesn't take the boys long to follow the example of the men. Now, you don't really care a cent about my health, and you know it!"

"You're wrong, Miss Whimple," he answered, and there was earnestness in his tone. "I like people I know to be well—most of them anyway."

"You don't care whether the others are or not?"

"Well, some of 'em—some of 'em. You see there's a few wouldn't know what to do with themselves if they was well, and the others—well, never mind 'em."

That was a rare luncheon. William ate heartily and praised the cooking, two things

that pleased both Miss Whimple and the maid. "I'm good and hungry," he said by way of explanation, "and Pa always says it ain't no disgrace to be hungry, and it's only a chump what won't eat all he can when he gets next to it. There's enough as can't get what they want to eat, he says, when they need it most, without anybody's what's hungry playing manners when they can get it."

He liked Miss Whimple's direct manner of speech and her habit of insisting upon answers to her determined questioning. It was in answer to her demand that he gave the story of his experiences as a rent collector, and he gave it well. He started out easily enough, but was quick to see that she was following him with keen interest; he noticed, too, that the maid had ceased altogether the "clearing away" process, and was standing by her mistress, listening with shining eyes and mouth slightly open. Their interest thrilled him, it mattered not that the audience numbered only two—it was to him as though nothing in the world mattered but the recital of his story in such a manner as that those two should live it with him. He rose as the recital proceeded

and paced the floor, using the chairs occasionally to indicate the positions of himself or some of the others who had played their parts. And the women laughed and applauded, or murmured words of sympathy and understanding as the tale proceeded. It came to an end somewhat abruptly, William suddenly embarrassed, half ashamed, altogether shy, longing to get out of the house and back to the office. "And that's all," he ended curtly.

"And did Mrs. Moriarity say anything when she kissed you?" asked Miss Whimple slyly. William blushed—he did not often feel so hot and uncomfortable at a mere question. He felt a sudden rush of anger at himself for blushing, and some annoyance at Miss Whimple as the cause of it, and it was only after she had repeated the question that he answered, "Yes—she—she—says, 'God bless ye, darlint.'"

They allowed him to go finally, but it was only after Miss Whimple had exacted from him a promise that he would bring Pete and the other young members of the Turnpike family to spend a Saturday afternoon with her.

The maid accompanied him to the door, and stood watching him as he walked down the

path towards the gate. William noticed that the grass-cutting operations had brought the maid's husband closer to the house. "John," said the maid, "ye'll nae be needin' tae stop the laddie wi' ony of yer fulish questions. If there's onything to tell aboot him, I'll tell it."

The man looked at her sharply, and William, as he passed him, said softly, "Gee! but you married men have the hard times." And he ducked in time to avoid a good-sized piece of wood that the man hurled at him.

CHAPTER XI

WILLIAM was not long in fulfilling his promise to Miss Whimple to take his younger brothers and sisters up to spend a Saturday afternoon at her house. His mother started early on the task of getting them ready, and spent an anxious hour keeping them clean and tidy until William arrived from the office and "cleaned up." She watched them, with pride and tenderness on her face, as they departed, Bessie and Joey, aged six and four years respectively, in front, where, as William put it, he could "keep an eye on 'em;" William and Pete, with Dolly, the baby, two years old, toddling along between them. As a shepherd, William herded them by street car and on foot, until they reached the Whimple house. Miss Whimple was at the gate to meet them. "Here's the bunch, Miss Whimple," he said smilingly, and then contrived to get in an aside to Pete, "Now you mind what I said about behavin' or I'll knock your block off when we gets away."

The youngsters were timid and shy. They hung to William closely for a while, with hazy

notions only of what to do with themselves, and from sheer embarrassment rebuffing the kindly advances of Miss Whimple and the maid. They began to feel more at home when Miss Whimple suggested a tour of the grounds, and a visit to the barn to see the cows, two fine Jerseys, and presently they began to talk to her and to one another with freedom, all but Dolly. Miss Whimple, who was greatly taken with the little toddler, noticed that William was particularly tender toward her, his hands were ever ready to lift her, or guide her over rough ground, he suited his steps to hers when she walked, and all the time he kept up a running fire of baby talk. Dolly was all dimples and smiles; she seemed to be perfectly happy and contented, but she made no sound. It was some time before Miss Whimple noticed this, and when she said to the little one, "Such a little pet, I'll warrant you talk a lot to your mammy though," Dolly smiled at her and then turned to William her wonderful brown eyes full of questioning. William smiled back, "She likes oo, Dolly," he said softly, and then looked at Miss Whimple, his eyes moist, his lips trembling a little. He tried to speak, but could not find words. But

Miss Whimple understood. Her hands went to her breast. "Oh—" she murmured, "I—I—didn't understand, William, I—I——" Down on her knees she went near one of the flower beds, pulled therefrom a rose, and, with the tears streaming, pinned the flower to Dolly's dress, saying half to herself, "Deaf and dumb—deaf and dumb—poor little mite. God bless you—and—help you."

Thereafter she made Dolly her special care, and the child seemed to like it, making occasional dashes on to the lawn to join William and the others, whose restraint having passed were playing with joyous zest, under the direction of the elder brother.

It was getting near to tea time when "Chuck" Epstein appeared on the scene. Tired of their play, the children had assembled on the verandah, Dolly sitting on Miss Whimple's knee looking over a picture book, the others listening to one of William's fairy stories. "Chuck," whose acquaintance with Miss Whimple dated back many years, took a seat near them. He was joyfully greeted by William and "the bunch," and Miss Whimple felt something like a pang of jealousy when Dolly wriggled from her knee

and went to Epstein. It was only for a moment though, the child was palpably so delighted to be with the old comedian, whose smile of greeting to her was wonderfully expressive. He tenderly lifted her to his knees, and with an arm around her little body, held her close to his side. William was dethroned, and he knew it, and accepted the situation quite calmly, though he did not laugh so heartily as the others when Pete demanded, "Tell us one of your stories, Mr. Epstein, they beat Billy's to bits." And Epstein told one, and then another, and another. He acted them too. The children screamed with delight as he changed his voice to each character of the story, yes, and changed his very appearance as they watched him, and all so naturally, so easily, that they seemed to be hearing and seeing so many different people taking part in the unfolding of the tales. They were almost hanging to the old man, when the maid appeared with the announcement that tea was ready. They entered the airy dining-room, crowding around "Chuck," all begging to be allowed to sit next him, and the argument grew so heated that William had to settle it. "Dolly on one side," he said with emphasis,

"and Bessie on the other, and everybody keeps quiet or gets out," and then in a loud whisper to Pete and Joey, "Don't you be makin' hogs of yourselves. No more'n three pieces of cake, mind."

But the terror of William's threats faded before the hunger of "the bunch," and the determination of Miss Whimple and the maid, to say nothing of Epstein, to see that it was appeased. Pete ate until even to chew became a decided effort, and when Miss Whimple pressed him to take "just one more piece of pie," he answered wearily, "It ain't no good, Miss Whimple—I'm full to the collar bone."

William, who had been glaring at him for some time, remarked scathingly, "Gee, you'd think you never got a square meal at home," to which Pete promptly retorted, "Well, I wasn't going to let Miss Whimple think I couldn't eat her cooking."

Tired, happy, and full, William and "the bunch" departed at last, Miss Whimple and Epstein going with them to the electric car—a quarter of a mile away from the house—the old comedian, despite the protests of Miss Whimple and William, carrying Dolly all the

way. He kissed her gently as he placed her in the car, and the child threw her arms around his neck and pressed her little cheek against his for a moment ere he left.

When the car had disappeared from view, Epstein escorted Miss Whimple home. They walked in silence for a little distance, and then she asked him suddenly, "When did you first meet William?"

"Three years ago," he said smilingly. "It was a chance meeting. You know," with a touch of sadness in his voice, "the people of my race are not always kindly treated—even in so new a country as this—and so big," he went on musingly. "Who shall say what Canada is to be in the future?—I see things, I see things—a great northern power; men of many races blended together in one great nationality under the British flag. Well for her that her statesmen build truly, well for her——" he broke off abruptly, and with a quiet, "I beg your pardon, we were talking of William. I was walking along the street one day, in a section of the city where many of our people live, when a 'rags and bones man' came along trundling a well-laden push cart. Three young roughs began to bait

him. They threw his cap into the middle of the street, overturned his cart, and began to attack him when William's father intervened. He was driving his express wagon near the scene. He jumped from the wagon, laid one of the roughs out with his fist, and turned on the other two. William, who had been riding with his Pa, took a hand in the proceedings then, climbing from the wagon and using the whip on the roughs. They turned and fled. William and his Pa helped the 'rags and bones man' to right his push cart, and then I introduced myself to them. The father turned my commendation aside with a good-natured remark to the effect that three to one wasn't fair play, and William added, 'What Pa says goes,' and there you are. He's a brave lad, a good lad, full of mischief I know, but—but he's full of determination too. William will go a long way. I will not live to see it; my days are few now, but I'll die the happier," he added softly, "for having known William Adolphus Turnpike."

CHAPTER XII

It was a big feeling William that reported for duty on the succeeding Monday morning. "Importance" was written large on his face, and again expressed in his every action. Lucien Torrance timidly ventured several questions in the hope of elucidating the why and wherefore of William's attitude without receiving any reply. "Say," drawled William after another attempt on Lucien's part, "what's the difference between you and a clam?"

"I don't know."

"Of course you don't; a fellow like you'd never know."

"Well, what is the difference?" demanded Lucien desperately.

"Well, a clam ain't no good unless it's baked, and that's what's the matter with you, Lucien Torrance." Whereupon Lucien imitated a clam to the extent of shutting his mouth and keeping it shut.

In the afternoon, Whimple having departed to the law courts, where the growth of his business was beginning to take him quite often,

William ordered Lucien to keep an eye on the office while he went across the road to study the baseball scores. "The way them Torontos is playin' on the road," he added by way of explanation, "has me goin'! They won five outer the last six games, and they're up against the Buffaloes to-day, and that's a hard team to beat. But Torontos can do it, b'lieve me—two outer three from Buffaloes my guess—have you got any?"

"No—I don't care who wins. Baseball doesn't interest me."

"What's that! Say, you're the limit; the last—the very last limit. Is there any game whatever that stirs your thick blood?"

"Lawn tennis."

"Lawn—Oh, cheese it, Lucien, cheese it. First thing I know you'll be tellin' me you play chess too."

"Indeed I do. Father is teaching me the game; we play nearly every night."

"Halt! who goes there?" William rolled out the words as though the fate of armies depended on them. "The ch-e-eld wonder of the cen-tury," he went on, waving his arms dramatically. "Pass the ch-e-eld wonder and be

careful with him." He walked around the bewildered Lucien, pretending to examine his head very closely. "Ah," he said, after the first scrutiny, "now I begin to tumble." His voice was now low-pitched and full of pathos. "Now I'm getting on to the reason for those grey hairs on so young a head." He placed one hand on Lucien's shoulder, and covered his own eyes with the other. "Me boy—m-boy," he murmured brokenly, "you're breaking my heart, my strong manly heart what's held up this many a year—against who knows what. Lucien, Lucien, you're burning the gas in both jets, to say nothing of the escape in the middle. Leave me, boy—leave me to my grief."

Lucien brushed William's hand off his shoulder and blurted out angrily, "You're crazy."

"Well, I'd sooner be crazy, if I am crazy, than be sane the way you are," returned William loftily. "'Chuck' Epstein says everybody's got a looney streaker some kind; else, he says, they'd all die young. It's a tough outlook for you, Lucien," he added as he departed.

Ten minutes later William returned, bringing with him a fine bulldog attached to a stout string. William's eyes were shining, and his

lips were parted in a wide grin of delight. "Say," he cried to Lucien, "get on to the pup."

Lucien didn't like the looks of the dog, and backed hastily away.

"Aw gee, he won't eat you," said William disgustedly. "He's a good one, a prize winner; and the cop says Briscoombe the banker owns him."

"Well, what are you doing with him?"

"Me! The dog just nat-ur-ally adopted me, Lucien. I was standing looking at the bulletins—and the Torontos is leadin', don't you forget it—when I feels something rubbing at me leg, and here's his nibs making up kinder friendly like. So I takes hold of the string and hunts up a cop and tells him about it. And I says, 'He looks like a good dog,' I says, 'I s'pose you can take him over to the station and leave him till the owner's found.' And the cop says, 'Not for mine,' he says, 'I ain't going off my beat to be a godfather to no dog. It belongs to Mr. Bill Briscoombe,' he says, 'and I'll bet he'll give you a two spot if you take it to him.' So I goes along to Briscoombe's bank, and the place is shut up tighter'n a drum. Say, but them bankers has the classy hours. And Briscoombe lives about a mile north of the city

limits, so I guess I'll have to take the dog up there to-night."

"Well, where are you going to put him in the meantime?"

"I'll just hitch him up to Mr. Whimple's table. He won't be in till near closing time, and then he'll just tell me I needn't stay, like he usually does."

And forthwith the dog was hitched. He did not display any decided signs of displeasure, though evidently ill at ease. Lucien could not be persuaded to go near the dog, but William was quite solicitous for the animal's welfare. He fed it on tea biscuits, surreptitiously abstracted from Lucien's luncheon box—that worthy being somewhat partial to the delicacy. Also overlooking the formality of asking permission, he used Lucien's cap as a holder for a liberal helping of ice water from the office jug. The dog ate the biscuits, but spurned the ice water, which William promptly emptied from the open window. Then things happened.

When the ice water fell, most of it fell upon the head of a distinguished K.C., who was using his hat as a fan while he discussed with an acquaintance some of the questions attendant

upon a provincial election then looming up. Some of the water sprinkled the K.C.'s acquaintance. Both men looked up quickly enough to note drops of water trickling from the sill of the open window, and as one, both turned and dashed up the front stairway to Whimple's office. William's hearing was acute; he did not like the sound of the hasty footsteps, and he was quick to surmise the cause. He made for the back stairway and descending in quick time, traversed the lane until, by a roundabout way, he emerged on the street, and came to a standstill at a point on the opposite side of the street, but in front of the office building.

The K.C. and his acquaintance by this time had burst into the office and dashed into Whimple's room on the run, not noticing the dog, over which the former fell full length. The bulldog had no particular grievance against the K.C., but he had a decided objection to playing cushion to him, and he snapped at the first thing he could get his teeth into. This, fortunately for the ornament of the bar, happened to be his coat tail, and on this the dog took a firm and impassioned hold. The K.C., by this time aware of the dog's presence, half rolled

and half scrambled toward the door, the dog hanging so determinedly to the coat tails that, between the combined efforts of man and dog, the table began to move, and moved until it stuck at the jambs of the door. The dog could not go any further; the K.C. gave a final rolling jerk that left the dog half choked, but plus a large section of coat tail. The K.C. thereupon rose, dust-covered, his dignity gone, murder in his heart, wrath on his face.

Lucien Torrance seized this unfortunate moment to leave the office of his employer and to enter that of William's. With a cry of satisfaction, the K.C. sprang at him. "Now I have you, you young villain," he shouted, and without more ado he posed the frightened and dazed Lucien in an old-fashioned attitude across William's desk, and in a manner that bespoke some knowledge, proceeded to thrash him.

Lucien was screaming, "It wasn't me—it wasn't me," when Whimple entered the office, also on the run, flung aside the perspiring K.C., righted Lucien, whom, on his entrance, he had thought was William, and demanded angrily the meaning of the disturbance. The

K.C. wrathfully explained from his point of view; Lucien tearfully, but firmly, declared that he was in no way responsible. "William—brought—the—dog—here," he sobbed, "and—he—threw—the—water out of the window." There were cries for "William," but no William responded, and all the time the dog, hanging on to the captured piece of coat tail, surveyed the scene in calm silence.

Whimble and the K.C., after some further parleying, essayed the task of releasing the dog and allowing the K.C.'s friend to leave Whimble's room. But they found themselves confronting a problem that their legal training could not solve. For the dog, thinking that they wanted his trophy, laid the piece of coat tail on the floor, placed thereon one paw, and bared his teeth for fight. Both men were angry; both men were puzzled. Each urged the other to action, and each held the other inferentially to be lacking in courage.

It was Lucien who suggested a way out. "If the gentleman in Mr. Whimble's room would get on the table from the back and cut the string, the dog would run away, I'm sure."

The plan was adopted, Whimble, Lucien,

and the K.C. having first taken a strategic position in the corridor leading to the rooms of Simmons, the architect. The string was cut, and the bulldog, having again taken the piece of coat tail between his teeth, walked slowly out of the office and down the stairs to the street. William saw him emerge, and ran across the road. The dog greeted him in a friendly manner, and William, taking the now shortened string, started for Briscoe's residence, for, said he to the dog, "It looks to me like there's been some trouble, and I guess I'd better not go back to the office until the morning."

And Briscoe, the banker, gave William two dollars for bringing the dog home. "But," said he, "where on earth did he get that piece of cloth?"

"I ain't sure, but I think I could make a good guess, Mister Briscoe," said William, and thereupon he departed for home, where later he slept the profound sleep characteristic of all office boys.

CHAPTER XIII

WILLIAM was at the office half an hour earlier than usual the next morning. He entered cautiously by the back stair, and reconnoitred carefully before closing the door. Lucien was the only person in sight. He preserved a profound silence to William's first questionings as to the happenings of the previous afternoon, but when William gave him one minute in which to decide on fighting or telling the story, he told. His narrative was curt and his demeanour cold: it became quite frosty when William laughed delightedly over the recital of the thrashing Lucien had received.

"Where did he hit you, Lucien?" asked William when the story had been told.

"In this room," answered Lucien with dignity, and William roared again.

Lucien waited until the laughter died away, and then called attention to the fact that there was a letter on William's desk. "You're right for once, Lucien," said William, who had noticed the letter on first entering the room. He picked it up, aware that Lucien was watching

him closely, and feeling certain that the letter did not contain good news for him. Therefore he slipped it into his pocket and walked out of the office to the Bay front, where, with his feet dangling over one of the wharves, he slowly opened the envelope and unfolded the enclosure. The letter was as follows:—

“DEAR WILLIAM,—In view of the events of this afternoon, the full details of which by the time you get this you will doubtless have gleaned from Lucien, it is impossible that you should longer remain in my employ. I am very sorry to lose you, but there is a limit to the length that even an office boy can be allowed to go.

“Yours sincerely,

“CHAS. WHIMPLE.”

“Fired!” said William to himself, “fired! Well, I ain’t surprised. Tough luck though.” He read the letter through again, and continued his soliloquy. “Well, after this, no more dogs for me. Gee—but I hate to leave that place. It beats the band how things will turn out rotten just when the luck seems to be all right.”

But William didn’t spend much time in regrets. The day was blazing hot, the civic

tug for the free baths off the Island sand bar was about to leave the wharf, and he constituted himself a part of the noisy human freight with which it was laden. He had a glorious swim, and at noon he surprised the Turnpike household by arriving for luncheon, having during his business career eaten that meal—packed by his mother's hands—in the office. Quite frankly, and with the mimicry which was the pride of his father and a constant source of astonishment to his mother, he related the whole story. His mother grieved despite her laughter: his father laughed and sorrowed not. "It'll come out right in the end," he said philosophically, "and if it don't, you'll soon get another job."

"Sure," said William; "don't you worry, Ma," he added. After the meal he departed, his head full of a plan that had been nebulous only after his first reading of the letter, but which now seemed to promise much. The more he thought it over, the better he liked it, and despite the heat, he walked quickly to the "Emporium" of one Walter Wadsworth. Walter was the owner, manager, and entire staff of the "Emporium," which consisted of a

rickety two-storied structure with a shooting gallery on one side, and a peanut, candy, tobacco, and fruit department on the other side. Walter, whose friendship with William was as old almost as the boy himself, owned the building and the land, as well as a more valuable property near by. But his greater claim to importance, in the opinion of most of the boyhood of Toronto, lay in the fact that for years he had held the refreshment privileges in the baseball park.

After a few preliminaries, William said, "The tea is due next week, ain't the,?"

"According to schedule," answered Walter, a thick-set, pleasant-faced, middle-aged man, who wasted few words, and who, in his day, had been a star of the diamond.

"How's the chances for a job?"

"I thought you were in the law business, young fellow?"

"Well—I was kinder makin' a dab at it."

"Chucked it already?"

"No," said William, "it kinder chucked me."

"Umph! Watcher want?"

"Well, what's the matter with me having a basket and selling stuff around the stands?"

"You're on, William: you're on. I've had an awful bunch of dubs on the job so far this season, and I'd be glad to let you have a try."

"All right: and what do I get for it?" asked William in a business-like tone.

"Well, of course, you see the game for nothing."

"Yes—" said William, slowly, "or some of it, between sales."

"Well, I never knew any one of the boys yet but could give all the details of the game, whether his sales were good or not. I guess you wor't miss much of any of the games."

"Go on—I see the games free," said William, "and——" he paused.

"And you get ten cents commission on every dollar's worth of stuff you sell."

"Any of the boys ever say they got too much?" inquired William, with a pretence of eager interest.

Walter smiled. "Not that I remember," he answered, "but they don't do so bad."

"All right," said William, "I'll be on hand for Monday's game. But I can't afford to be loafin' until then. Anything doin' before that?"

"This place ain't had a cleaning up since I don't know when," replied Walter, "and there's a lot of old boxes in the back yard that have to be broken up for firewood sooner or later, and stored in the cellar. Want to tackle the job? There's a few dollars in it anyway."

"Sure," said William, and set to work forthwith. He toiled steadily in the Emporium, but not with his usual cheerfulness, for he was really sorry to be away from Whimple's office. The more he thought of the causes leading up to his dismissal, the more he wished that Lucien had been responsible. "He got the lickin' anyway," said William to himself with a smile, "but darn a fellow like that: I wonder if he ever made a fool of himself in his life."

It was at this moment that William noticed a large megaphone, one of Walter's cherished possessions, in the back part of the Emporium. "Say, Walter," he cried excitedly, "let me have a crack at the megaphone."

"Go ahead," said Walter good-naturedly, "but don't blame me if you get pinched for disturbing the peace."

William carried the megaphone upstairs, rested one end on the sill of the open window, and

took a critical survey of the passers-by on the street.

"Wow!" he cried aloud, and as though addressing some one in the room; "look who's a comin'." He hastily adjusted the megaphone, waited until he thought the person he had spoken of was within striking range, and then there arose a weird shriek that attracted the attention of everybody within seven blocks of the Emporium. It filled the heart of one boy momentarily with fear, and brought him to a sudden standstill without at once becoming acquainted with the source of the noise. He looked around bewildered, and, as he looked, voices seemed to bellow in both his ears, "Good evening, Lucien. How many stamps did you lick to-day?"

Several people halted, irresolute, eventually focussing their gaze on Lucien, who, having now noticed the megaphone, was staring towards it like one under the influence of hypnotism. Again a question bellowed forth from the megaphone, "Oh, Lucien: where did he hit you?" and Lucien, waking up to the truth of the situation, for once displayed some evidences of his youth. He shook his fists towards the open window, and cried out threats of vengeance on

William, but those were soon drowned in another blast from the megaphone. "Get on to Lucien, ladies and gents, the chee-ild wonder of the century." It was then that Lucien, with a final shake of his fists, turned and fled. William laid the megaphone away and walked down the stairs, to find Walter at the door gazing after the fleeing Lucien.

"That kid was hollering something about knocking your clock off," said Walter. "He seemed to be sore on you."

"Maybe he is," answered William, slyly, "but yesterday he was sore for me."

CHAPTER XIV

DURING the next few days William found plenty of work to do at the Emporium, and in the intervals of leisure he consulted gravely with Walter Wadsworth on the methods to be followed to attain success as a pedlar of refreshments in the stands of a baseball park. He did not, however, neglect his morning lessons with "Chuck" Epstein in Tommy Watson's auctioneering rooms. There is this to be added too, that neither Epstein nor Tommy questioned him as to the loss of his position with Whimple. They had laughed with the latter over the causes therefor, but as William did not mention it himself, they carefully avoided opening up the question, knowing from their experience with him that, in his own way, and at a time of his choosing, the lad would talk of it.

William was, however, a puzzle to Wadsworth, though he had been acquainted with him so long. In the intimacy of their relationship at the Emporium, Wadsworth found himself constantly amazed at the lad's shrewdness, at his vocabulary of slang, the readiness with which

he could turn from the sheerest of jibing and fun-making to the recital of a bit of "Bill Shakespeare," or a scene from the plays of other authors. "Where on earth do you get it all from?" he asked William one afternoon when the lad, with real dramatic fire, had recited "Henry's oration to his men before Agincourt." You, dear reader, know it, of course.

"Outer bock," William said, all slang and smiles again. "Say, Walter, it beats the band and the good stuff some of them guys had in their think-tanks, and it fits in, a lot of it, like they were toddlin' around Toronto to-day."

"It certainly does—some of it," said Walter. "I wonder if they ever played baseball in those days?"

"Not so far as I can make out," answered William. "Half their time they were fighting, and the other half making love: that is, most of 'em. Our friend Bill Shakespeare and a few others were writing plays and acting them too."

Walter stood at the door for a minute and watched William as the latter walked away from the Emporium that evening, and to himself he said, "He's a corker that one; but there's a heap of boy in him. If there wasn't, that

stuff he's carrying around in his brain would soon drive him to the daffy house."

The great day arrived at last, and William, keen for business and a new experience, reported early at the baseball grounds, where Walter Wadsworth supplied him and a dozen other boys with uniforms of white cotton. The caps bore in letters of gold an appeal to buy a certain baking powder, and on the back of the coats, in black letters, was an announcement regarding the charms of a particular brand of chewing tobacco.

"It's a shame," said William with sarcasm, "that there ain't any reading on the pants."

"Yes, it is too bad," answered Walter, solemnly, "but you can never get everything you want in this world. I get the caps and the suits free for the advertising they have on 'em; they're not so bad, it might be worse."

"It might be," answered William, "but not much," as he departed for his section of the grand stand with a basket hanging from his neck and a small megaphone attached to one wrist with a strap. In the stand, William's courage deserted him for a few minutes: the crowd was large and included many ladies.

The lad was uncomfortable; his voice seemed to have deserted him utterly. All the fine things he had meant to say were for the moment forgotten. It was not until a woman had purchased a bag of peanuts, and a man a cigar, that William became convinced that his goods were wanted, and that restored some of his usual confidence. He began to call out his wares and found that sales were easily made, though not so rapidly as he had hoped. But as the game progressed, his courage steadily rose. The Toronto team was playing that of Buffalo, an ancient and honorable enemy, and the game, in its initial stages, was very close. With the score one to one in the third innings, William found that his voice had come back, and he began to use it with all his power and most of his courage.

"Peanuts, popcorn, chewing gum, candy, cigars, and tobacco," he shouted as he walked along the aisles: "here's where you get 'em at the lowest prices and finest quality."

The responses were becoming readier, but not fast enough, and William began to use the megaphone. Taking a stand in front of the lowest seat and addressing the crowd impartially

he asked, "Did all you folks leave your money at home, or ain't you never had any?" Some of the people laughed, and the emboldened William went on, "Ladies, what's the good of a ball game without peanuts or chewing gum? I've got a lot of both to sell," and that resulted in a goodly number of sales. Then he tried again. "There's lots of fellows here with girls, and it's a shame the way they're letting the girls suffer for a little candy, or chewing gum, or peanuts. Make the fellows loosen up, girls!" The crowd laughed, and William tried in vain to respond to the demands for his wares from all quarters. His basket was soon emptied, and in a little while he had disposed of his second load. He sold others, but when the game had advanced to the sixth innings, with the score still one all, he found the people almost unresponsive to his appeals, and, returning to Walter's little store under the grand stand, changed into his street clothes and rushed back to see the finish of the game, his first venture as a pedlar having netted him the sum of fifty cents.

The game had reached its critical stage, "the fatal seventh innings," when William again

made his appearance known. The crowd was painfully silent, for the Buffaloes, with only one man out, had men on the first and second bases, and the heaviest hitter of their team at the bat. The batsman spat on his hands, wiped them off in the dust around the home plate, and set himself firmly for a swing. The Toronto pitcher having almost succeeded in tying himself into a bow knot suddenly unloosened, and sent in a swift drop ball, and even as it sped the voice of William, well modulated through the megaphone, but quite distinct, cried out, "Strike one." Strike it was, the batter missing the sphere by several feet, and following the miss there came in stentorian tones from the umpire the words, "Strike one."

"Why did you call it a strike before?" yelled the batsman.

"Never opened my mouth," retorted the umpire, and the crowd laughed.

The batsman again set himself for a swing, and the pitcher once more tried to make a human knot; again the ball shot, this time straight and true for the plate, and as it did, William, with a volume of agonised pleading in his voice, yelled, "Mind your head." Instinctively the batter

ducked and, of course, missed the ball, while the umpire dispassionately cried, "Strike two." The batter grieved loudly and bitterly. He accused the umpire of having eyes like a codfish, and of being stampeded by "some guy in the stand." He declared him to be incompetent to the verge of insanity, and wondered, in a voice that could be heard all over the field, how he had kept out of the asylum so long. His team mates supported him loyally, and incidentally demanded of the Toronto team's manager that William, whom they had discovered as the source of the heavy batter's discomfort, be instantly removed from the grounds and kept therefrom until the game was over, while the impatient, but delighted crowd, cried at intervals, "play ball," "put 'em off," "give the game to the Torontos."

The manager of the Torontos disclaimed all or any responsibility for William. "Nay, nay, Pauline," he said gently, when the Buffalo manager repeated his request, "if the boy annoys you, put him out yourself, or ask the police to do it."

"You know what'd happen if I tackled that boy," answered the Buffalo man heatedly: "why, that crowd would eat me."

"Not in your present condition," retorted the Toronto man affably, "you're too hot."

The Buffalonian appealed to a police constable, but that worthy shook his head. "There's only me and a sergeant here," he said, "and we ain't over anxious to start a riot." The sergeant strolled up and was consulted.

"It can't be done," he said sagely, "there isn't a section under the law or the regulations governing the force that'd justify me putting the kid out. He ain't hurting anybody anyway."

"But he's putting our man on the pork," cried the Buffalonian disgustedly; "how in the name of Uncle Sam is the team to go on playing with that kind of a racket!"

"It's nothing to the racket there'll be if you don't go on with the game," said the sergeant quietly, as he walked back to the stand. And the game went on. The batter was struck out on the next ball, and the crowd shrieked its delight, the innings closing without a score.

When the eighth innings started, William, all swagger and confidence, started on a new tack. "Fans and fan-esses," he said, addressing the crowd through the megaphone, "why don't you root? Make a noise like you meant it."

The Torontos have simply gotter win this game; they need it, but you gotter help 'em. Now then, every-body—root,” and “root” they did, arduously, continuously, joyously. The din was terrific, ear-splitting, and weird. Everybody had a different idea as to the best methods of rooting, and even the fanesses made noises of sorts. Nobody thereafter heard what the umpire said, they gathered his decisions only by the result of the various plays, and when, in the ninth and last innings, the Torontos batted out the winning run, one prolonged wild “root” spread the glad tidings to all and sundry outside the gates for many blocks around.

William, with a final yell through the megaphone, hurried back to Walter Wadsworth's stand, and there ran into Whimple and Simmons, who were pledging each other in glasses of lemonade. The boy paused irresolutely.

“William,” said Whimple, who was also rather embarrassed, “was it fair?”

William smiled. “Well, Mister Whimple,” he said, “when that bunch was here once last season for a series of five games, my Pa took their stuff from the station up to the hotel in one of his express wagons, and I was with him,

so, of course, I helped to lift the stuff off the wagon, and when I'm through the same manager what they have this year slips something into my hand and I thought it was a dime, and he says to me, 'I hate to give a Canuck anything,' he says, 'but you are a bright chap, only don't spend it all at once,' and when he goes into the hotel I opens up my hand, and there's one of them dinky little American cents. You bet I was mad, but my Pa says to me, 'It's mostly a long street that don't have cross streets, William,' he says, 'so, keep your hair on.' I did, and I guess me and that Buffalo man are quits now."

CHAPTER XV

ONE afternoon, a few days afterwards, Whimple, dropping into Tommy Watson's store, found the auctioneer and "Chuck" Epstein gravely examining a doll's carriage and its occupant, a doll eminently respectable in mein and terrifically blue of eye.

"Is this a new line, Tommy?" Whimple asked.

"No—it's 'Chuck's' purchase, he intends to present the outfit to a young lady."

"To Dolly Turnpike," said Epstein quietly, "it's her birthday to-morrow; what do you think of it?"

Whimple examined the carriage and the doll as closely and as gravely as the others had done, and expressed the opinion that it was all right. He added the hope that the young lady would think so too, and the opinion that she was extremely fortunate in having among her friends so thoughtful a man as Epstein.

It is doubtful if Epstein heard him, although it was quiet enough in the back part of the store

where the three had conducted their examination. Whimple started to repeat his hope when he became aware that Tommy was shaking his head and holding a finger to his lips. Whimple thereupon broke off in the middle of a sentence and kept silence.

Epstein was looking at him, but not with the eyes of one who sees the object he gazes on. Whimple thought to himself that he had never dreamed the retired comedian was as old as he looked now. He wondered if it would be kindly taken if he should advise the old man that home and a rest in bed would brace him up a little, when Epstein began to speak.

"My little girl," he said, in the rich round voice his friends loved to hear, "was born on the same day of the month that Dolly was. Only, a long time ago—quite a long time ago, or perhaps I only dream that it was long ago," he stammered and paused, and then went on. "She would have been thirty years old now, wedded, no doubt, a mother, perhaps—what dreams—what dreams——" Again he paused.

Tommy Watson rose softly, went to the front door, deliberately locked it, and then returned to Whimple and Epstein—who was talking again.

"I had retired from the stage, happy and contented, to take up a business career, so that I might be with my wife and child, and the other children, if they should come. We loved so well—we loved so well—and—and——" again a long pause. And then, as though some one had spoken to him, "Yes, yes, I went back to the stage again, but that was afterwards; and how they welcomed me and cheered me and praised me; for I made them laugh as in the olden time, but my heart was gone.

"My little girl was two years old when we began to notice the shadow. Just two; with a wealth of brown hair and eyes, her eyes—they were brown too; such a brown, so wonderful, and they were her mother's eyes. The shadow darkened; the little tongue became strangely quiet, the little limbs were tired so easily, the little hands were all too often idle. But how she clung to us—she seemed to know that she must go, and so she slipped away at last, so gently—so gently—and we could not hold her.

"What is a man anyway?" he demanded abruptly, but they did not speak: they knew he did not see them. "What is a man?" he

reiterated. "I have made thousands laugh the world over: I have driven away their sorrows and heartaches, for a few hours at least, but I could not drive away the shadow; I could not, I could not. Nor could she who held first place in my heart and first place in the heart of our darling." His voice lowered again and he went on, "After—after—we had laid her little body in the graveyard we went to the home of a friend, thinking—thinking: I know not what. But when the night came, I could not rest nor even sit still, and all the while she was listening, listening, and looking at her arms. I knew, I knew: for my heart was bleeding too, and at last I took her arm, and together we went back to our own home; 'For it seems to me,' said my wife, 'that I hear the patter of her little feet moving about the rooms, and I hear her crying, "Mamma: Dad-dy:" and we are not there, Jacob, and she'll be so lonely, so lonely.'

"I was thinking that too. I could not have stayed away, and so back we went. She—she—my wife, seemed more content there. But always I noticed that she seemed to be listening and waiting, and often she smiled and talked

as though she was answering the little one, but—but——” his head was drooping, he seemed to be falling asleep. Whimple stirred uneasily, and Tommy Watson, whose cheeks were wet with tears, shook a warning finger at him. The old man looked up again. “The shadow came again,” he said quietly, “and somewhere—somewhere—they are waiting for me. Men differ on religion, and fight over the future state. What do I know of it? I don’t know. A Jew, though a British subject born, a comedian—some say I have no religion, and never had. I don’t know. But, oh! I know they wait for me—and where they wait is home.”

For a long time there was silence; Epstein was the first to break it. He stood up suddenly, and with a new light in his eyes asked of Whimple, as though seeing him for the first time that day, how he liked the carriage and the doll.

“Fine,” said Whimple as heartily as he could, for his throat was lumpy and his heart was beating quickly.

“I’m glad of that. Why, what’s the matter, Tommy, you look as though you had been crying?”

"Slight cold in the head," returned Tommy rather abruptly, "rotten time of the year to get a cold too."

"It'll be all right in a day or two, I hope," said Epstein. "I must be going to Turnpike's. I want them to give this to Dolly to-morrow. You know I had a baby girl one time"—he proceeded quite firmly—"she—she died—and Rachel, her mother, followed—shortly. We called her Dolly—after Flo Dearmore's mother, who was very good to us"—here he looked smilingly at Tommy, who had blushed at the mention of Flo's name—"my little girl had beautiful brown eyes—just like Dolly Turnpike's."

He left them then. Whimple lingered a little while and finally blurted out—"I never knew that about Epstein."

"I've heard little bits of it," said Tommy, whose eyes were still moist. "Say, but he's a wonder though." Whimple agreed. Twice he made as though to go, and after the second attempt he asked bluntly, "Does William come here every morning yet?"

"Yes," answered Tommy.

"Well, I—that is——" he did not finish the

sentence, and did not know how he could, but Tommy saved him. "That's all right," he said, "I'll send him over right after his lesson to-morrow. Whimple, you know what the good book says: it's more blessed to take a man on again than to refuse to give him another chance."

"Well, I don't just remember that," said Whimple, "but I do know that I've had sixty applicants in response to my advertisement for an office boy, and of all the——"

"I know—I know," broke in Tommy, "there's mighty few William Adolphus Turnpikes in this world, and he'll be just as glad to get back as you will be to have him."

"Confound him," said Whimple, but he laughed as he said it.

"Sure, but that'll be all right so long as the two of you get together again."

When Whimple reached the office the next morning he found William there. The lad's face was shining with pleasure. "I'm sorry about that dog business, Mister Whimple," he said, "and I'll try to be good."

"All right, William," said Whimple happily, "let it go at that." But to the surprised

and disgruntled Lucien Torrance, William said darkly, "Well, what between you and the bunch that was after my job, I guess Mister Whimple was nearly crazy. It's more'n one man can stand for keeping you straight; it beats me how your own boss can put up with it."

CHAPTER XVI

THE provincial political pot, which had been simmering all through the early spring, boiled over in July of that year. The Legislature was dissolved with all the solemn formalities attendant upon the death of an important public body, and many gentlemen with aspirations for public office or government jobs found that they must forego much of the joy that was offered in the shape of baseball, lacrosse, and rowing fixtures, and get out and hustle for their respective "grand old party."

The issues at stake in the contest, according to Tommy Watson, were such as no self-respecting auctioneer could put on the block at any sale and not blush for shame. "It's just a case," said he, "of the government, knowing they cannot be beaten, wanting to make sure of a new lease of power," and Tommy, as usual, was not far wrong. But if there were no really great issues in a general sense, there was a big one in Mid-Toronto, and stripped of all party

rhetoric and verbiage it was this: "Shall 'The Big Wind' continue to represent us?"

The people were tired of "The Big Wind." So was the government. But the government dare not say so, while the people—including the many who had voted for him four years before—hoped that "The Big Wind" (his real name does not belong to this chronicle of facts) would have sense enough to blow himself out of public life. He might have done that if some of those who called themselves his friends had been strong enough in their friendship to have so advised him. For even in the moments—and they were many—when he thought much of himself, "The Big Wind" had glimmerings of common sense.

The government had taken him up for reasons that at the time seemed to be sufficient. He was the sole male survivor of a family that had done much for Toronto; was the possessor of a large fortune, and a liberal giver to charities, as his father in his lifetime had been; his position socially was distinguished, and he was a handsome man, tall and straight, with a fine olive-complexioned face, well set off with mustachios and an imperial. Much had been

hoped from him, a cabinet position was in his reach, until the day he made his first speech in the Provincial House. That was a day indeed. The party papers had blazoned the announcement the day before that on the morrow "The Big Wind" would make his maiden address in the House, taking as his subject "two or three important matters in connection with the budget. A rare treat is in store for those who will be able to attend," and all the rest of the hyperbole that the party papers—except yours, dear reader—are wont to indulge in. Of course, the galleries of the House were crowded, and on the floor every member was in his seat. In the press gallery the attendance of managers and editorial writers was as large as that of the men who do the real work on newspapers—the reporters. All the reporters representing the government papers had been instructed to give "The Big Wind" pretty fully, while the men from the opposition papers had been informed that they might give him a "good show." When he arose to address the House, the government side greeted him with cheers, and the opposition joined in the desk pounding that followed.

"The Big Wind" started gracefully—he always did that, and the House listened indulgently while he patted every one on the back—not forgetting himself. This occupied some fifteen minutes, during which the reporters began to ask one another in whispers, "Why doesn't he get going?" They were beginning to wonder if he would ever get going when he said, "And now, Mr. Speaker, as to the budget." There was a suppressed "Ah!" in the press gallery, followed by a surprised "Oh!" when "The Big Wind" averred that "budgets" had been known since the world began. He dived into a pile of manuscript, and made some allusion to the Book of Genesis—without giving any one the slightest idea of what he was talking about. He paid a great deal of attention to Genesis, he stayed with it for an hour or so, in fact. People began to leave the galleries, members left the chamber to find solace in the smoking-room or the library. The managing editor of the chief leading government organ, who had condescended to take a seat in the press gallery, told the three reporters representing the paper to cut the speech to one column, and himself returned to his office. An hour later

this editor telephoned to the press gallery and asked one of his reporters, "Say, where is that chump now?"

"Well," answered the reporter, "he's just figuring on leading the children of Israel into the promised land."

"It's a pity the Egyptians couldn't kill him," shouted the editor; "cut him down to half a column."

And "The Big Wind" went on blowing. At six o'clock he had left the children of Israel to their fate, and was grappling with the Norman invasion of England. The House adjourned for dinner then, and it is on record that as they walked the corridor to the dining-room, a member of the cabinet asked the premier, "Where in the name of all we stand for is this fellow going to land?" that the premier, without even the trace of a blush, answered in two words, and that one of them rhymed with "well."

"The Big Wind" resumed his address at eight o'clock at night and concluded it at eleven, with a few playful allusions to the Peninsular War and an expression of regret that time did not permit of his dealing with other matters no less important.

And this was the man that Mid-Toronto was asked to return again because his own party was afraid to antagonise him, and the opposition felt that they hadn't a ghost of show to carry a riding that for twenty years had beaten their candidates by large majorities. It looked indeed as though "The Big Wind" might be elected by acclamation.

Two weeks before the official nomination, Whimple, himself a dabbler in politics and a supporter of the government, heard, with other rumours, that an independent candidate would be in the field in Mid-Toronto, and the next morning the rumours were declared, by no less a personage than William Adolphus Turnpike, to have truth as their foundation.

"You live in Mid-Toronto, William," said Whimple, jocularly, "and you ought to know what's going on there!"

"Well, I know a few things," said William, smilingly.

"Such as——" and Whimple paused.

"Politics," said William, grinning.

"Yes!"

"A fight—a fight, and it'll be a loller-pall-uselar."

"A what?"

"That's just a word my Pa uses, Mister Whimple—honest, I couldn't say it more'n once a day."

"And who's going to fight 'The Big Wind,' pray?"

"The People's Party."

"The—what—oh! I say, William, what kind of a game is this?"

"No yarn—it's straight goods. The People's Party was formed last night, and picked their man."

"But, how do you know that? There's nothing in the papers about it this morning."

"No, because Tommy Watson's the press agent and secretary, and he says it's time enough to give it to the papers to-night, so he's going to do it."

"Tommy Watson! What on earth is he butting in for? He doesn't live in the riding!"

"No, but he was at the meetin', him and a few others—about seven altogether—and he says, 'I'll keep the minutes,' he says, 'and load up the papers.' The meetin' was held in our house," William went on, "and my Pa was elected to the chair. Gee! it was an

elegant meetin': Pa made a corking speech. He says, "'The Big Wind' ain't to blame much for thinking he's the white-haired darlin'," he says, 'because his friends should put him wise that he ain't.' And Tony Gaston, what drives oner Jimmy Duggan's coal-wagons, he says, 'The Bigga de Wind is an awful mutt,' so he ups and asks why don't Jimmy Duggan run, so Pa says 'Carried,' and Tommy Watson makes 'em do it all reg'lar, and they forms the People's Party and puts Jimmy Duggan up for their man."

"It sounds foolish," said Wimple, reflectively.

"Well," said William, slowly, "that's what Tommy Watson says. 'It looks foolish,' he says, 'and that's just where a lot of other people's goin' to be made look foolish too. The party men'll be thinking there's no chance for Jimmy, and first thing you know he'll slip in.' So they asked Jimmy is he game, and Jimmy says he's game to buck up against any government anywheres, he says, especially one what'll stand for 'The Big Wind.'"

William paused, and then went on slowly, "Say, Mister Whimple, my Pa's a wonder to know what's what, and he says quite solemn

to Tommy Watson after the meeting's over, 'Jimmy's the best man in a fight of any kind I ever knew,' he says; 'b'lieve me, Mister Watson,' he says, 'he'll punc-ture "The Big Wind." This part of the city don't have to stand for a gas-bag that ain't even got sense enough to burst when it's too full, and we ain't going to stand for it,' he says."

CHAPTER XVII

WHIMPLE found the secretary and press agent of the People's Party busily engaged in the back of his store preparing reports of the nomination meeting for the newspapers.

"What's this I hear about a fight in Mid-Toronto, Tommy?" he asked.

"Meaning that the news has been gently broken to you by one William Adolphus Turnpike?"

"Yes."

"Well, put your money on Jimmy Duggan, coal and woodyard man, defender of the rights of the common people, candidate of the People's Party, the valiant David that's going to knock the stuffing out of the false Goliath——"

"Isn't it Goliath?" suggested Whimple, mildly.

"Well, maybe you're right, but, any way, there'll be an awful explosion in Mid-Toronto on August tenth, duly fixed by royal proclamation as the day on which the manhood of this fair province——"

"Oh, drop it, Tommy——"

"If the gentleman has any questions to ask

I'll be pleased to answer them at the close of my address," Tommy went on. "I was about to say this fair province of Toronto, rising in their might, will go to the polls, well knowing that under the freedom and liberty which is theirs by right of the grand old flag——"

"Tommy, shut up!"

"I was about to say, they can vote as they darned well please, and the same will be mostly the way they've voted every election the last fifteen years—except in Mid-Toronto."

"Are you through?"

"Well, that's all I can think of just now."

"But what's the use? You haven't got the shadow of a chance. Why, the government 'll be returned hands down."

"Sure; but 'The Big Wind' won't. He'll be returned sky high. Don't you forget it. Why, Mid-Toronto's just seething, Whimble—just seething. Every patriotic soul in the riding is repeating that well-known verse from Bill Shakespeare's 'Saturday Night in London':—

'Breathes there a man with soul so punk,
Who never to himself has thunk,
By hedges and by hook or crook,
We'll surely give Big Wind the Hook.'

"Shakespeare! Shakespeare! Are you sure, Tommy?"

"Well, perhaps it wasn't him; but he's as good as any to tack it to."

"But, Tommy—seriously, is Jimmy Duggan going to fight?"

"Fight! — you bet your life he's going to fight, and he's going to win, too."

"Umph!"

"Umph again, Whimple, you and the government will be umphing to the finish, and then you'll umph some more."

"But look here, Tommy, you know the opposition and its press has had the government tottering to its fall every election these fifteen years, and it's as solid as ever."

"Well, we'll make a dint in its solidity any way. You keep your eyes on Jimmy Duggan."

And Whimple did; others were a little slower to turn their gaze in that direction. They treated Duggan and the People's Party as a joke until the official nomination meeting when the strength and enthusiasm of Jimmy's supporters jolted them. There was a hurried consultation thereafter in the government's campaign quarters. Cabinet ministers were

turned loose in the riding; the city papers supporting the government, though loth to do it, began to play up "The Big Wind." Every hall in the riding was hired for every night of the remaining week of the campaign, and two or three meetings were held every night. The People's Party and Jimmy Duggan could not afford to rent halls; their material platforms were express and coal delivery wagons drawn up on vacant lots: their speakers, outside of Tommy Watson, were men who laboured in the factories and workshops, or, like William Turnpike's Pa and Jimmy Duggan himself, had little businesses of their own. Jimmy could talk—after a fashion. "Pa" Turnpike did a little in the speech-making line. Tommy Watson did a great deal, and so did Tony Gaston, who had distinguished himself by nominating Duggan on the night the People's Party was formed.

Tony was a treat; William followed him around from meeting to meeting, declaring one of Tony's speeches to be worth more than all the others put together. "Gee! you'd orter hear him, Lucien," he said to Simmons' office boy one afternoon. "He's a Dago—but he's white.

He gets leaning over the side of a wagon and he waves his arms till you'd think he'd shake them off, and all the time he's spitten' out words so blamed fast you'd wonder his tongue don't drop off. 'Ladies and der Gents,' he says, 'dis is de pr'roudest minnit of me life. It's an honor to stand befacin' such a audonce to spek a wor'r'd,' he says, 'for me frend, James de Duggan.' Somebody yells, 'Well, yer work f'r him, that's why.' 'Sure, I wor'rks for him,' says Tony, 'and I wor'rks har'rd f'r him,' he says, 'and that's more'n you do f'r the man dats payin' you good mon ev'ry week what you don't ear'r'r'n. Ladies and der Gents,' he says, 'har'rk nottin's to dat loaf-er, but vote f'r the frends of de honest wor'r'k de mans and stick de Big Wind so up he blows-puff.' "

But a new problem faced the People's Party when, for the final four days of campaigning, "The Big Wind's" committee announced a band or an orchestra at every meeting for every night.

"That'll take lots of our people away," said Tommy Watson, thoughtfully, when he read the announcement. "What can we do, I wonder, to meet it?" But William's Pa was

solving the difficulty while Tommy was pondering over it. Flo Dearmore—the theatrical season being over—was in town, living, as she always did between seasons, with her mother. She was immensely interested in the contest, the faithful Tommy Watson, whose courting of her was proceeding with some success, keeping her fully informed, and when William's Pa called on her, she listened to his request with interest, refused to consider it at all, but, woman-like, changed her mind, and appeared that night on one of the People's Party platforms—an express wagon loaned by Turnpike. Tommy Watson was in the chair, and he almost fell out of it when he saw Flo approaching the wagon. Almost before he could move, she was seated beside him, many willing hands having assisted her on her way.

Tommy's eyes were popping and his mouth was gaping. He framed his lips to question her, but the words would not come. Flo greeted him demurely, and smiled mischievously over his evident embarrassment. "Don't worry, Tommy," she said, "I'm in this fight too. They're not going to beat your man if I can help prevent it. If they have their bands—well,

I can sing still," with just a touch of pride.

"Flo — Flo," gasped Tommy, "you're a brick. There's lots here who know you, and some of them know you're going to be Mrs. Tommy Watson pretty soon, and they'll tell the others. Flo, this is worth hundreds of votes to us. Oh! but you're a woman in a thousand." She flushed with pleasure at this. "You'll have to tell me later all about it," Tommy went on; "who put you up to this, or did you think of it yourself?"

"It was Pa Turnpike," she said.

"Good old Turnpike. Say, but that Pa of William's is certainly smart. You remember William: the lad who sang for you at the Variety."

And just here Jimmy Duggan, who had been making a brief address, finished suddenly, as was his wont, with an invitation to all, "whether they know me or not, to solemnly weigh the merits of the two candidates, and to decide in favour of the man whose platform principles are those for which the common people have long been fighting, and if you do, you'll vote for me."

On the instant that he finished Tommy

Watson was up. "The next speaker," said he, "will be a singer. (Cheers.) Our respected town's lady, Flo Dearmore—(cheers)—who has won a high place on the stage. She is for Duggan—(loud cheers)—and says it'll break her heart if he ain't elected, and that wouldn't do. (Cheers.) She's a woman in a million."

Here some one cried out, "Why don't you marry the lady, Tommy?"

"I'm going to, and pretty soon," answered Tommy, promptly, turning toward Flo as he spoke. All blushes, she nodded her head affirmatively, while the crowd shouted approval. Then she sang for them—two songs only—and afterwards went on to another meeting, accompanied by Tommy Watson, Tony Gaston, and William, where she sang again. And William's heart was throbbing with happiness, for, from the night in the Variety, when he had first seen her on the stage, he had placed this lovely lady in a niche of his heart next to that occupied by the mother to whom he was an unsolvable puzzle. He would have followed her to fifty meetings that night had she been going to that many, but his happiness was the more nearly perfect because the lady and Gaston were going to the

only other Duggan meeting together, and he would be able to worship her, and listen in ecstasy to her singing, and afterwards hear one of Tony Gaston's fiery orations.

"Gee!" said William to himself: "ain't this the great luck?" and then, with an admiring glance at Flo, "and ain't she a pippin?"

Of course, Jimmy Duggan won. Even the present generation of hustling Canadians know that, though many of them could not tell an inquirer, off-hand, the name of the Canadian Prime Minister who preceded Sir Wilfrid Laurier. Of course he won—by a bare 3000 majority—that's all. Mid-Toronto shouted itself black in the face that night, and went about its own business for the next seven days in a manner that one eminent alienist would have described—had he been giving expert evidence for the defence at fifty dollars per hour—as "between a state of hysterical mania and senile decay, but not close enough to the one to necessitate confinement in an asylum, or to the other as to require the attention of a trained nurse." Jimmy Duggan was the least affected of any of the People's Party. He made fifty-five brief speeches of thanks in various

sections of Mid-Toronto, and made his last to Tommy Watson, Tony Gaston, and Pa Turnpike, who escorted him to his home.

"I owe most to you three," he said earnestly, "and you'll have to help me think up some kind of legislation to press for. There's one thing we have to be glad about though," he added.

"What's that?" asked Tommy.

"Well—I ain't a government man, so it's no good anybody coming to me to worry me to death trying to get a government job for them."

CHAPTER XVIII

"WHAT are you going to do about William?" That was the question Flo Dearmore asked of Tommy Watson one afternoon when Tommy should have been attending strictly to his business as an auctioneer, but was neglecting it for the business of courtship, which, he declared for the one hundred and ninety-ninth time, had more charms for him than the most exciting sale he had ever conducted.

"Well, what about him?" was Tommy's answer.

"Isn't that Scottish though?" said Flo: "question for question."

"You know the old proverb," Tommy said, smilingly, "'don't answer too quickly, or you'll put your foot in it.'"

"I never heard of it before," she said, "and I don't believe there is such a proverb."

"It's something like that, anyway," retorted Tommy; "but, coming back to the question I asked, what about William?"

"I asked it first."

"You're beginning to get your hooks in for the last word rather early, aren't you?"

"Tommy Watson! make no mistake about me. I'm going to have the first and last word now and—and——"

"To the end of your married life, I suppose," broke in Tommy with a sigh so heavy that it shook him.

Flo tapped him on the head with the fingers of one dainty hand. "You're almost intelligent at times, Tommy Watson," she said, with mock seriousness.

"Yes," he retorted, "yes; almost intelligent enough to go on the stage," and then he spent the next ten minutes in explaining that he had meant to convey no reflections; that his sweetheart was the dearest, most lovable, and most intelligent person in the world; that he would never have made, and never could make, an actor: that he was the biggest bone-head in the boundaries of the City of Toronto, and all his friends and acquaintances knew it. She made him withdraw the last assertion, and beg her pardon in his nicest manner for insulting himself and his wife to be, and then came back to the subject of William.

"There's promise in the boy," she said, "he'll be a great comedian some day, if he gets a fair start."

"Yes, and he knows it, too," Tommy commented, "confound the kid. Sometimes he drives me frantic, but all the time I like him. He hasn't got the faintest notion of ever being anything but a comedian. He's almost uncanny. What he doesn't think of hasn't been thought of by anybody yet, I'll bet. He can't find words, often, to tell what his thoughts are, and then he falls back on the greatest line of slang I've ever heard. Only yesterday he said to 'Chuck' Epstein, 'Many's the time when things all go wrong I've felt like going home and crying, honest. Then, when I'd get home, there's Pa dead tired, but chirpin' like a cricket, and Ma tired too, but hustlin' around gettin' supper for Pa and the kids and me, and Dolly and Pete and the others all waitin' to see what line I'm going to take. So I gets busy and cuts up, and, say, maybe we don't have the merry ha ha times, and my Pa says to me often, he says, 'William, make 'em laugh; a feller what can hide the sores in his own heart,' he says, 'while he's makin' somebody else laugh,' he

says, "he's a winner more ways than one." And it's true, Mister Epstein.'"

"Yes," said Flo, softly, "it's true."

"But now, here's the situation," Tommy went on. "William's Pa is doing pretty well now, and he won't stand for any charity game. If the boy will go back to school, Pa Turnpike will cheerfully consent, but William won't. He's very stubborn on that point. 'Not for mine,' he says. 'If I could stick to history and reading lessons, all right, but the rest of the truck they try to shovel into a boy's head at school kills me dead. Say, I've come outer the school some days almost scared to put me feet down for fear they'd slip over the edge of the world, and I never really know whether the sun goes around the world or the world around the sun, and often I ain't been sure whether the sun might hit us, or us hit the sun, and everything bust to pieces.'"

"Well, you'll have to try persuasion on him."

"We're trying it," said Tommy, "and I think we're beginning to see daylight. It's down to the point now where William comes over and takes luncheon in my room with Epstein and myself, and he gets an hour of

reading and instruction from the old man then, in addition to the one in the morning. We arranged that with Whimple, and William walked right into it. If we could only get him to cut out the slang——”

“What!”

“Well, that’s just what Epstein said when I suggested it to him.”

“I should think so, Tommy Watson; that boy is a natural born ‘slanger.’”

Tommy laughed.

“You’re laughing in the wrong place, Tommy—that boy will go on absorbing slang to the end of his days, unless you’re foolish enough to shame it out of him. By the time he is ready to go on the stage he will have a stock-in-trade of slang that will be the making of him, for he is so apt and ready with it. But, tell—no, I’ll tell Epstein myself—to take care that his slang does not mar the rest of his speech. He must not be allowed to get into the way of just mouthing slang and nothing else. Does he read well?”

“You should hear him, Flo: it’s a treat, and when he gets stuck on a big word he dives into the dictionary head first, or questions

Epstein until he can say it properly and understand its meaning."

"That is real progress. He's a delightful mimic, too."

"Yes: he takes off Epstein, or Whimple, or myself, to the life."

"The latter must be extremely difficult," said Flo, demurely.

"True—quite true—for there's no doubt I'm a wonderful man, 'Flo," answered Tommy, solemnly: "so inscrutable and impassive—is that the way to say it—so adept at hiding my inmost thoughts, so——"

"But you needn't squeeze my hand so hard, Tommy, while you pronounce your eulogy; it isn't an auctioneer's gavel."

"It's a very pretty hand, though," Tommy said with a smile, "a very pretty hand."

"Are you an impartial judge, Tommy?"

"Well, I can't say I have much experience in regard to the hands of the fair sex, but I'm willing to bet there are none like yours in the wide world."

"And you have travelled so much of it."

"Not lately, perhaps, but I once spent four hours in Montreal, 330 miles away; think

of it! and half a day in Hamilton—that's all of forty miles off—and Toronto never looked so sweet to me as it did when I got back to it. Good old Toronto; it's been kind to me. It has given me the dearest of all women, and a good business, and —and —" he kissed her hand and a few minutes later departed.

At a down town corner he ran into William, who was studying with great interest the baseball bulletins displayed outside of a newspaper office. William was one of a pretty large crowd that was doing the same thing. News bulletins seemingly had little attraction for the majority of them. As Tommy neared him, William remarked to a man in the crowd, "Gee! wouldn't that jar you?"

"I don't see why: that's a very important piece of news. It isn't every day the city council decides to spend so much——"

"City council my neck," broke in William, rudely, "what's that got to do with the score?"

"Score! what score?"

"Oh, gee! I thought I was talking to a baseball fan."

"You thought wrong, young man," retorted

the man, sharply. "I've no patience with such frivolous things."

And then William caught sight of Tommy. "Say," he called out, "what do you think of that score?"

Tommy, himself an enthusiast, studied it carefully. "Jersey City two, Toronto one," he said aloud, "and down we go to second place, William."

"Yes; and Jersey City putting us there! Say, that team of ours is certainly on the pork."

"Oh, they're not doing so badly; we're only a few points down."

"Only? What's the use? Every time they lick the good ones they fall down when they stack up against the tail-enders; it's rotten."

"Cheer up, William, cheer up! The team will soon be home for another long series, and then they'll soar."

"Yes," said William, gloomily, "to the bottom."

"You seem to be downhearted; what's the matter?"

"Mister Whimple lost a case to-day."

"Well, lots of lawyers do that. In baseball, or law, or anything else, William, you've

got to lose sometimes. Remember the old saying, 'It's better to have tried to buck the line, and failed, than never to have tried at all.' "

"But Mister Whimple's just getting a good start, and he can't afford to lose cases. It gives him a bad steer with people that's looking for lawyers in the winning column!"

CHAPTER XIX

THE plans that men make in the belief that the knowledge and wisdom of the adult mind knows what is best for youth are many and of small account. For the youthful mind sees easily through the most of them, intuitively perhaps, and not by methods of reasoning, and decides for itself whether it shall accept or reject them. And office boys constitute a particularly abnormal department—if such it may be termed—of the youthful mind. This is merely a roundabout way of preparing the readers, if any, of this veracious chronicle with the fact that William had not, as Tommy Watson supposed, “walked into” the plan whereby he was to receive an additional hour of tuition from that prince of tutors, “Chuck” Epstein. If this was a history, the truth might be coloured with the glamour of romance at times. But, as Tommy Watson himself was wont to say, “Facts are real, facts are earnest, facts are very stubborn things, facts are facts where’er you find ’em, facts are what gives truth its wings.” Therefore, it is here set down in

black and white that William himself engineered that additional hour, and the wise men who thought they had initiated it patted themselves on the back because it was a success.

William, of a truth, was beginning to find himself by finding others out. He had discovered, and it was a bitter shock to William, that Lucien Torrance, for whom his feelings were tinged by good-natured tolerance, was making good use of his spare time around the office. Lucien had no "vaulting ambition:" he would hardly have understood the meaning of the words. He wanted to improve his position though, and he practised consistently on the typewriter, he took lessons in shorthand, and was beginning to master the intricacies of book-keeping, taking his lessons therein at a night school. His desk was always neat and clean, and the clerical work that Simmons, the architect, was beginning to trust him with was well done.

William's desk always looked to be overcrowded, and was never neat. Periodically, the lad had a cleaning-up day, but he never seemed to make much headway in getting rid of the assorted mass of newspaper and magazine

clippings that he accumulated with avidity. It was an amazing collection, and every bit of reading in it, and every picture, referred to comedians; always comedians.

Lucien Torrance tackled him about it one day. "Why don't you throw all that truck away?" he said; "it's an awful lot of rubbish."

"Truck! Rubbish!"

"Yes: what do you want with that?"

"You wouldn't tumble to it if I told you," William answered, so mildly that Lucien, who had expected a stinging rebuke, was almost overcome with surprise. "It's a secret," William went on, "a dark secret, but one of these days you'll be paying good money to find out about it."

"Not me."

"Yes, you, Lucien Torrance; you'll be doing it, and paying for your girl, or your wife, perhaps, to help you find it out."

"I haven't got a girl, and as for a wife, I'm only fifteen——"

"Don't give your age away," interrupted William. "I told you you wouldn't understand, and I ain't going to waste any of my breath trying to make you now. Some day you will,

unless you turn to stone, like the fellow at the show last week."

"Oh, you mean 'the petrified man.'"

"You've got the name down fine, Lucien; I wanted to say it, but, honest, I couldn't. I thought it was stiffified, or something like that. But don't worry about me and this 'truck' and 'rubbish,' Lucien; I'm not daffy yet. Let's talk about something else."

"What?"

"Love, for instance."

"Love: what on earth do you want to talk about love for? Are you——"

"Not on your life," interrupted William, hurriedly, "no skirts for mine. Why I wouldn't worry about any woman in the world but Ma or my sisters. But I'd like to get at the bottom of this love business anyway. 'Chuck' Epstein says love is the greatest thing in the world, but it makes the most trouble. Can you beat that?"

"I don't know anything about it——"

"No, no; I don't figure that you do, Lucien. But when 'Chuck' says it, he says it to Tommy Watson, and Tommy heaves a sigh big enough to burst the store to pieces if the door hadn't

been open so's the sigh floats out into the street and blows an old gent's hat off, and——"

"I don't believe it."

"I know you don't, Lucien: that's another of your troubles. Some day, maybe, your mind'll take in somer the things you're missin' now, and maybe it never will. But, anyway, Tommy says, 'You're right, "Chuck,"' he says, kinder gloomy like. Now, whatjer think of that, and him going to be married to Flo Dearmore in August?"

"Tommy Watson is?"

"Sure."

"I always thought he was an old bachelor."

"Well, you think again, Lucien, think again. Tommy ain't so old; and it seems to me every man's a bach-e-lor until he gets married. Now, you'd think Tommy'd be fairly bustin' with joy, and maybe he is; I don't know. But he goes around singing all them mournful songs, and, say, you'd ought to hear him singing. Oh, gee! Honest, Lucien, the fog horn over on the Island's a treat to it. Your boss was over once when Tommy was whanging away on oner them songs, and he says, 'Heavens, Tommy, when's the funeral?' and Tommy says,

'Guess again, Simmons,' he says. 'It's for very joy I'm singing.' So your boss says, 'Well, it ain't a fair deal for you to be so all-fired joyful as to kill everybody else's joy,' he says; so Tommy shies a book at him, and Simmons ducks, and the book hits a vase and smashes it. Well, you'd think Tommy would be mad at himself and at everybody else because of that, but he laughs and says to Simmons, 'Better the vase than your head, Simmons. Gee! I'm so happy I could smash everything in the place.' So your boss says, 'Wait till your wife begins to try her cookin' on you.' Then Tommy gets after him, and Simmons scoots, and Tommy begins again on Scotch songs; all the slow, sad ones, and, honest, I had to go out too."

"You spend a lot of time there, don't you, William?"

"Sh—sh— Don't be sleuthing around, Lucien, you might find out something, and I'm afraid the blow would kill you. Anyway, I asked my Pa about this love business, and he kinder laughs, and looks at Ma, and she laughs too, like when she's pleased about something, and they kisses each other right there, and Pa says,

'It'll come to you some day, boy, please God, and when it comes——' and then he kisses Ma again and don't finish what he's started to say, and I don't ask him. I know enough anyway to know when Pa ain't going to be no mark for a buncher questions, but it's got me going. There's Miss Whimple loved a fellow when she's young, and he gets carved up by some black fellows in a desert around Egypt somewhere——"

"The Soudan."

"That's the name; who told you?"

"My father's brother is a soldier, and he fought the Dervishes."

"That's the bunch. Say, you certainly know something, Lucien, sometimes. So, Miss Whimple don't get married, and it's the icy mitt for anybody that asked her; and plenty did."

"She's a funny old——"

"You say a word about her, Lucien Torrance, that ain't nice, and I'll knock the head off'n you. She's—she's—well, there ain't another like her except Ma."

"I wasn't going to say anything——" began Lucien.

William cut him short. "You started wrong

then," he said, "that's all there is to it; and now what about your boss?"

"Mine?"

"Yes; he's going crazy about a girl."

"He's what?"

"You heard me; you know you did. Say, he can't sleep nights thinking of that girl, by the looks of him, and he don't see her more'n seven times a week, and she's just as looney about him too; but she ain't showing it much."

"I don't believe it!"

"There you are again, and a lot of this thing going on under your very nose. Say, you're sticking so close to business you can't see a blame thing but your work. Do you ever have a day dream, Lucien?"

"I'm too busy."

"That's it, busy—too busy to have day dreams. Gee, I don't know what I'd do if I never had 'em. Say——"

Whimple entered at this moment with Simmons. The lawyer was urging the architect to "buck up." William smiled. "The girl loves you," Whimple said, in an undertone, but not pitched low enough, for the two boys heard it quite distinctly. William winked at Lucien,

and the latter blushed. Simmons refused to be comforted, and passed into his own office, melancholy settled heavily on his usually bright face, and Lucien followed him.

"William," said Whimple a few minutes later, "will you please take this letter to Mrs. Stewart, and wait for an answer?"

William's "yes" was prompt. He liked Mrs. Stewart, a young and pretty widow, to whom of late he had carried a number of notes. While he was putting on his cap, Whimple, who was sitting in his own room, began to sing softly. William did not pay particular attention to the air until, as he started toward the outer door of the office, Whimple's voice rose a little, and then he listened intently. Whimple could sing well, and he was singing well now, and the song was "Annie Laurie." William paused irresolutely, looked at the letter, counted swiftly on one hand, then opened the door, and ran quickly down the stairs. At the bottom of the stairs he paused again, once more he counted, and then said to himself, "Friday, and I've taken five letters to her this week, and brought five back, and—and—I thought I was smarter'n Lucien. Dang it, all the men are going crazy together."

CHAPTER XX

THE real awakening of William to the sterling qualities of Lucien Torrance came with the Binks' knitting factory fire. The story was told in full detail by the newspapers at the time, but the public memory is not long, and, because this is a record of facts, it is here re-told, from the view-point of William and Lucien. The factory, in which some sixty girls were employed, was a three-story building, facing the rear of the building in which were located the offices of Whimple and Simmons. On one side it ran so close to the latter building that even the boys could, by a little stretching, touch the sill of a window to the right of the window in the room that served as office for William and waiting-room for his employer's clients.

The fire broke out one hot afternoon in August in the lower floor of the factory, and, as the building was "modern and fire-proof," the flames naturally spread at a terrific rate. Some thirty of the girls managed to escape from the lower floor at once. The escape of the others was

cut off completely, the one iron ladder, designated as a fire escape, and running down to the ground, being, on its lower rungs, "wrapped in flame," as the reporters have it.

William and Lucien, who had been making faces at some of the girls at the time the fire broke out, were shocked into helplessness for a moment. Lucien recovered first. "Quick," he said, grasping William by the arm, "we can help." He half pulled William into Simmons' room, "Grab the other end," he commanded, curtly, himself seizing one end of what appeared to be a long table top. In reality it consisted of three stout planks braced together underneath, and resting on scantling supports. Several plans were pinned to the top, and these Lucien yanked off without ceremony. Between them the boys carried the table top to the window, and, though for a few seconds it seemed that their combined strength was not equal to the demand on it, they succeeded in placing one end of it on the sill of the open factory window, around which the imprisoned girls were gathered, some screaming wildly, others pale-faced, but quiet. A rough bridge was thus formed between the factory and Whimple's office. Lucien

crossed it first, with William a close second. The boys urged the girls to "get a move on, one at a time," but it was not until William had escorted the heaviest one across to Whimple's office that the others, despite the rapid approach of the fire, could be persuaded to venture. Convinced of the safety of the "bridge," they began to make the journey rapidly enough. Lucien calmly and quietly encouraged them. William said nothing, but he carried out with alacrity every suggestion Lucien made.

By this time a detachment of the fire brigade was on the scene. Three of the firemen, with a hose, rushed up the front stairs of Whimple's office and to the window through which the girls were coming.

"Well, I'll be swizzled," said one of them, excitedly, "who made the bridge?"

One of the girls paused a moment before leaving the office. "Two boys," she cried, hysterically, "they're in the factory helping the other girls."

"Bully for them," shouted one of the firemen. The next moment he hurried across the "bridge," which bore his weight splendidly, and assisted the boys. Other firemen, with more hose,

arrived, and several streams of water were soon playing on the factory walls below the "bridge."

"We'll save this building, anyway," said one of the firemen, handling a hose from one of Whimble's windows. And save it they did.

As the last girl crossed the bridge, the fireman who had been assisting Lucien and William ordered them to get out quickly. The big room was now full of smoke, the lads and the firemen were almost choked with it, and tongues of flame were beginning to lick one of the wooden partition walls. Just as the man spoke, the partition fell. A burning scantling struck Lucien on the head and sent him to the floor. In a moment William grabbed the burning timber with his bare hands and tried to lift it, but without the assistance of the fireman, who inserted his hook-axe under it, and added a man's strength to that of the boy's, he would not have been successful. Lucien was still conscious when they picked him up, and, with the assistance of William, made the journey across the "bridge" to Whimble's office in safety. Here kindly hands temporarily bound up his wounds and those of William too, the

latter meanwhile asserting loudly, "Lucien did it; he thought of it; Lucien did it."

Finally, Lucien's parched and cracked lips parted in a smile. "Couldn't have done it without you, William," he gasped, and then the floor, so William Adolphus Turnpike afterwards solemnly asserted, rose up and hit him, and he knew nothing more until, in the evening, he woke up in a private ward in St. Michael's Hospital. There were only two beds in that ward. When William opened his eyes, a kindly faced nursing sister was bending over him.

"Where's Lucien?" he demanded.

The sister smiled. "In the bed near you," she said, gently; "his mother and father have just left him; he's——"

William sat straight up in the bed. "Say," he said, brokenly, "he ain't going to die, is he?"

"No," she answered, "he's doing splendidly, and he's fast asleep."

William laughed happily. "Oh, but he's a pippin, a real pippin; and me thinking he was a dub. If he wakes up, and I'm asleep, nurse, you can tell him from me that I'm a mutt. He's the real thing, is Lucien." Then he looked

down at his hands, swathed in bandages, and grinned. "Kinder early for winter mitte," he said. "Gee, but my hands sting! Has my Ma and Pa been here?"

"They're here now, waiting to see you. They've been here for two hours, William."

"Two hours! and me lying on the downy while they're worryin'. Me—uh!—I ain't worth it."

The sister opened the door, and Mr. and Mrs. Turnpike, with anxious faces and eyes somewhat dimmed, were soon bending over their boy, kissing him, and whispering words of love and praise and sympathy. After their farewells, William turned to the sister with shining eyes. "Nobody ever had a Ma and Pa like mine," he said, "and my hands are sore, but I'm tired—tired—" he closed his eyes—"and I'm a mutt. Lucien's got it on me all over when it comes to a show down." And William slept.

There followed a strange experience for the two boys. Reporters interviewed them, and the interviews mostly read as though the boys were past masters in the use of correct English. One enterprising reporter wrote up William's

story just as the lad gave it. The majority of readers appreciated that interview because the lad's language appealed to them, but by the time the editor of the newspaper in which it appeared had read the third letter from "pro bono publico," protesting against the putting of so much slang into the mouth of a mere child, he regretted that he had not made the reporter re-write it. Being human, he, of course, lectured the reporter with asperity, and the reporter, being a man of spirit, instead of taking the lecture to heart, resigned, entered the field of literature, and, in a comparatively short time, became a noted writer of short stories. He blessed William at the time and ever afterwards for opening his eyes to the possibilities of the boy in fiction—and fact.

Two days in the hospital was enough for William. He gave his ultimatum to Ma and Pa after the mayor had called upon Lucien and himself to express admiration "on behalf of the citizens of Toronto," and informed them that they were to be presented with gold watches "as a permanent token of appreciation of their bravery."

William insisted on going home that day.

"Another day here," he said, "with bunches of people buttin' in and slobberin' over me, and I'm a dead one. Besides! it was all Lucien; I'm no bloomin' hero."

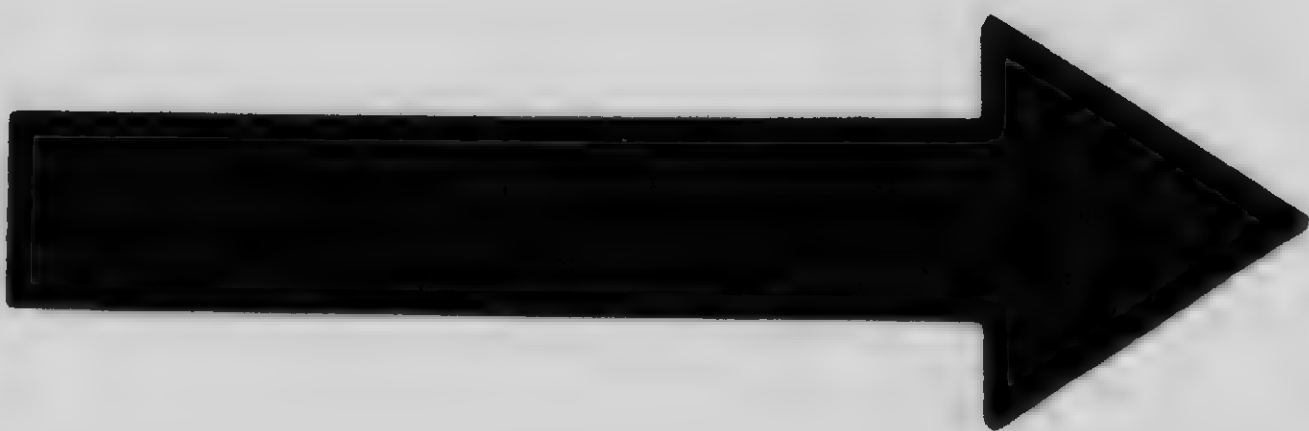
Lucien was sick of it too, but, because his injuries were the more serious, he had perforce to stay a little longer in the hospital.

The presentation of the watches was made in the mayor's office one week after the fire. It was a painful ceremony, so far as the boys were concerned, and they were immensely relieved when the last word had been said, and their admiring parents were allowed to proudly escort them to their respective homes.

CHAPTER XXI

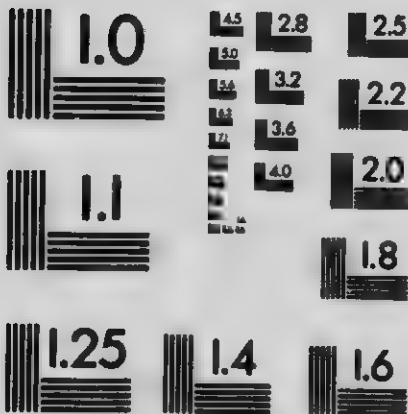
It required the combined efforts of Whimple, Epstein, and Watson to persuade William to take a two weeks' holiday before returning to work. He didn't want to go to the country: knew he would die after two days there: was positive he was as strong and as able to work as he ever had been: and, in short, he wouldn't go. Watson wormed the truth out of him after an hour's private talk. "I'm just crazy about keeping up my lessons with Mister Epstein," said William, finally; "I feel that I can't afford to miss one; I want to be something, Tommy, and I'm finding out every day how much of a dub I am."

Tommy suppressed a strong desire to whoop; the spirit of the lad was so manifest; his earnestness so marked. But, as calmly as possible, he said, "Don't worry on that score, William, a rest will do you good. Besides, if you go where Mr. Whimple wants you to, you'll not miss a great deal. I know the boys in that family. They're clean; they have a good library, and—oh well, you go! Remember the



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proverb: 'It's better to go slow sometimes, than to hustle all the time.' "

William was back at work two weeks before Lucien, who, on leaving the hospital, had also gone to the country. The boys greeted each other cordially the day Lucien returned, and spent some time, on the first opportunity afforded, in recounting their experiences. Lucien told his in a plain, matter-of-fact way, and declared he was immensely relieved to be back again.

"Well," said William, when it came to his turn, "I'm glad to be back too. Not that I didn't like it. Say, after the first day, I enjoyed ev'ry minute. I went to the Millers' farm at Varencey, in Haldmand County, and maybe they ain't THE PEOPLE. B'lieve me — well — say, honest, Lucien, all the fool things I uster think about farmers, callin' 'em 'Rubes' and 'Hay-seeds,' and such like, and about their work and houses and everything, makes me feel like kicking myself from here to home, and that's quite a walk. If I was oner them kind that wakes up in the night and thinks about the past, I'd blush in the dark for the fool I was. But when I falls asleep it's me's a log till somebody yells in my ear that breakfast's ready.

Anyway, what I used to think about farmers is buried deep, with a lot more foolish truck I've been getting rid of this last few weeks.

"Say, there's three fellows there, Emerson, Laird, and George, and every one of 'em's over six feet, and wide too, and smart, uh! Laird, he's a schoolmaster already, and you'd orter hear him telling stories about them old Romans and Greeks, and explainin' things that a dub like me's sure to get stuck on. The other two they say one schoolmaster to a family's enough, and it's them sticking to the farm, and they ain't no slouches on farming neither. They've read an awful lot, and attended lectures, and got things down fine. They doctor the horses and cattle when they're sick, and, unless they break a leg or something like that, they doctor themselves too. Emerson, he's a swell re-citer. Honest, Lucien, he'd make you laugh, or cry, or anything, with the pieces he knows by heart, let alone what he can do with pieces he ain't never seen before when he reads 'em out for the first time. And George, he can clog-dance, and play the banjo like a pro-fessional. And the girls are smart too; there's four of 'em. Gee! I thought I'd have to go home long before two

■

weeks was up, they were so kind to me. The boys and their Dad—they always called him that—uster work like blazes from daylight, and often before, right on until evenings, and then we'd sit around on the porch after supper, and—and——" he broke off abruptly.

"Yes?" said Lucien, quietly, after a moment's silence.

"Say, Lucien, did you ever get a hunch all of a sudden, just when you're enjoyin' yourself, that it'll never be the same again?"

Lucien answered with a prim, "Oh, yes—sometimes."

William went on, "Don't it grip you're heart—don't it? We'd be sitting there—the house is built on pretty high ground, and on one side there's quite a valley, with a little stream running through it; they call it a river, but it ain't; and lots of big trees, and some willows. And our old friend, the moon, would be glum-merin' around, and making paths on the water, and you'd hear the frogs, and crickets, and sometimes the creaking that the wagons would make as they passed. That's all; there wouldn't be another sound for a while, and then Emerson'd begin to recite, or George would play the

banjo, or Laird would tell us stories about them old fighters long ago. And all of 'em know the names of the stars—whatjer think of that?—and they'd talk about them like they were old friends, especially their Dad, for he came from Scotland and was a sailor. Oh! it was great—great. Then some one would begin to sing, and everybody would join in the chorus. First, they'd sing somer the new songs; then the comic ones; then it would be 'Annie Laurie,' 'Will ye no come back again,' 'The Low-backed Car,' 'Willie, we have missed you,' 'Nellie Grey,' 'My Old Kentucky Home'—all the old-timers. I'd join in too, and one night when we were singing 'Will ye no come back again,' that think tank of mine got outer gear someway, and starts a hammerin' on one thought It'll never be the same again—never—never—never,' and it made me feel bad, I tell you, but I went on singing. I had that kinder feeling three or four times after. It sounds crazy, don't it, Lucien? but, oh, it's true, it's true! But, don't you forget it, I had a bully time. I don't know when I really liked it most, in the early morning, when everything's bright and fresh, or at night, when it's

still, like I'm tellin' you. There's one thing I noticed about the nights, too, that got me going."

"What's that?"

"The st... Say, Lucien, they seem to be so much closer than they do in the city; and more of 'em: that's because there ain't so many buildings, and you can see more sky. Sally used to say——"

"Sally!"

"Yes, Sally! she's the youngest, and at that she's a little older'n I am. And there ain't no mother in that house, because their mother died just when Sally was a kiddie, and they're all mothers and fathers to her."

"William—is it——?"

"Now, hold on, Lucien; hold on. Don't bite on anything until you're sure you can swallow it. Say, she's a wonder, Sally is! There's been something wrong with her spine for about four years, and she can't walk, 'cept once in a while she kinder hobbles slow around the table. They have a big wheel chair for Sally, and always when it's fine they wheel her out on to the verandah, and there she sits for hours an' hours. You'd think she's have a grouch being the

way she is, but, honest, Lucien, she's enough to make all the grouchers get a hunch to throw themselves off the earth, she's that chirpy. Laugh! she's got a laugh 'ud chase the blues outer anybody; but she's mighty sad too, sometimes, when she thinks no one ain't watchin' her. Sally's a wonder, Lucien—and she's got big brown eyes, and brown hair fallin' all around her face, and the sweetest mouth——”

Lucien had occasional flashes of originality, and struck in with one. “Sweetest—the sweetest——”

“Yes,” said William, firmly, though he blushed slightly, “sweet. And if you're trying to be wise about me getting tangled up with the fair sex the way you think, cut it out, cut it out. You're on the wrong track, and the danger signal's set against you. But she's certainly a wonder. Sometimes I'd be two or three hours in the field with the boys, and maybe it ain't enough to keep a fellow's think tank humming, to try to learn a quarter of what they know about the soil, and what to do with it, and about the insects, and roots, and everything. Then if I'd get tired I'd go and sit on the porch by Sally, and we'd just talk, or

perhaps we'd both have a book, and just sit there readin', and I'd get tired readin', and begin to think about things, and one day, when I'm doing that I turns sudden, and Sally's looking at me, and she says, 'Yes, it is a big world, Willie'—they all called me that—she says, 'and we're none of us nearly so im-port-ant as we like to think we are.' Gee! I almost swallowed me ner^l for I was just thinking that; and she read my thoughts often like that, as easy as— Oh, well; I told her all about my plans, and what I mean to be, and—and—I've got to get busy and write to her now. I promised to."

Lucien smiled slightly.

"Rub off the smile, you hero," said William, pleasantly, himself smiling too; "there's none of that love business going into my letters."

CHAPTER XXII

SALLY read that letter, sitting in the porch in her wheeled chair; first to herself, and later aloud to all the members of the family. It was scarred by blots and erasures; in some places William had obviously "stuck" on words, and, after writing them as he thought they should be spelled, had consulted the dictionary to make sure, and had re-written them.

This is what Sally read:—

"DEAR SALLY,—The Toronto baseball team is on the top of the heap again, and all the rest of the bunch is laying around like old tin cans waiting for the garbage man to collect them. Looks like the pennant for us. I'm half crazy about the team, so's Tommy Watson, and the other half of him's bughouse about Flo Dearmore, so he's a rare subject.

"Lucien's all right now. He's surprising me all the time. A husky kid came into the office to-day with a message and got kind of sassy when I told him the boss was out on business, so I gave him a swat in the eye, and he was just about wiping the floor with me when Lucien

tackled him, and in about five minutes that kid was a sight to see. He cried fierce, but Lucien wouldn't quit till he said he'd behave himself the next time. So I says to Lucien, 'Well, if you ain't the artist with your fists; where in Sam Hill did you pick that up?' and he says his Pa used to be a pretty good boxer and gave him lessons. And me thinking yet in spite of the fire that he was a kind of sissy boy. So I began to believe what Tommy Watson says, that you can't tell what's in a fellow until he has a chance to show it, and lots of fellows ain't going around hunting up chances, they just wait till one comes. Anyway, Lucien's a pippin.

"My Pa got another man to work for him, and he's bought a team of mules. Mules are the dickens to work steady all the time. Pa says he don't know yet which has the most sense, the mules or the new man, but the man's good and honest, and the more work he gets, the more he smiles, and smiles is about all the language he has. I never saw a man what could say so much with a smile. Honest, the horses and mules get frisky the minute he gets into the stable, like they were saying, 'Here he is, cheer up.' When he gets them, Pa tells the bunch

at home the mules in't brought up in no riding school, but Pete's not hearing very well or something, and the first chance he gets tries to prove Pa's wrong. So Pete's going around now with six stitches on the front of his brain works, and he's that wise about mules a mule doctor couldn't beat him.

"I told Ma and Pa a lot about you, and Pa says he'd like to know you. He's great on people what has a lot to put up with, and don't shout about it. And Ma she looks at Dolly, and says, 'God bless her,' meaning you.

"Jimmy Duggan, you remember I told you all about him, he wants to bring in some bills when the Provincial House meets, and he says to ask your father and the boys to think something up, because he says the city people have so many crazy schemes he's afraid to try anything for them. So ask them, please.

"My feet are tired chasing letters to you know who for Mister Whimple. She's a fine lady though, and I hope the boss will marry her. When I took a note up yesterday, she was talking to me about my visit, so I told her a lot of things I thought she's like and about your brother George going courting, and she says,

'It's a terrible thing this love, William,' and I asked her does she suffer much from it. So she blushes awful red, and looked prettier than ever, and says kind of like she didn't remember I was around, 'Most women do—most women do, and I never really knew until now what love was.' Now what do you think of that, and her married once before! Mister Simmons, he's Lucien's boss, he says her husband was an awful booze fighter right till he died, and my Pa says there ain't any man yet that's ever been able to win a fight against booze so long as he's willing to let booze get into his inwards.

"I guess this letter will make you awful tired, specially if it's a hot day, but there's seems to be so much I'd like to tell you. You remember the old man I told you about that I collect rent from, the fellow that has rheumatics. He's getting quite chummy with me now. I was there the other day, and he hardly swore at all. He says he's sorry he's wasted so many good cuss words on me when he's got so many relatives waiting for him to die so's they can get his money. Honest, the way he curses about those people is awful. I told Tommy Watson about him one day, and Tommy says the Good

Book is dead against wasting anything. A man like that, he says, could make a great hit by saving all his curses for one year, and then letting them loose on one of the people he don't love. Whoever got them would never forget, and they'd think more of Mister Jonas than they do with his throwing curses around as though they were cheaper than newspapers.

"Tommy's got a great set of hired help in his store. One of them's from Aberdeen, and the other from London, England, and you ought to hear them. Say, they're fighting all the time about the battle of Bannock-Burn, a million years ago or so. I butted in one day, and says, 'Well, ain't that battle over long ago?' and I got what was coming to me all right, just like butters-in usually does. They got me in a corner and talked at me for half an hour straight. When one would stop to draw his breath, the other would go on talking. I began to feel sick—real sick—no joking, and all of a sudden I burst out laughing. I don't know what for, I didn't want to laugh, I felt more like crying, but, by ginger, I couldn't stop. I laughed, and laughed, and then some more, and the tears were running down my cheeks all the time, and

I was rolling around like I had wheels for feet. So those two ninnies began to look solemn, and the Englishman shook me a bit, but I couldn't stop. Then he began to snicker like a chump, and first thing he knew he was hanging over one of Tommy's bargain bedsteads just laughing, laughing, laughing, though it was more like crying too. The Scotchman started next, and every time he laughed he rolled into something until he fell on the floor and just lay there laughing.

"I suppose we'd be laughing yet or else dead of it, only Tommy came in. He took one look around and his face got awful white. He asked me something, but I could only sputter, then he tried the Scotchman, but he only rolled some more—gee! it makes me giggle to think of it. So Tommy rushed to the 'phone and called up a doctor, and then he ran out of the store and got a cop, and when he gets him in he says to the cop, 'They're dying,' and the cop says, 'Like blazes they're dying,' he says. So that got me going worse than ever, and the cop was beginning to snicker too. So he pulls out his baton and he yells out, 'I'll knock the block off the first yap that lets out another laugh,' and he gives the

Englishman a poke in the slats to show he meant it. And you bet we quit on the spot. Me, I made a grand sneak the minute I found I could stand straight, and just as I'm getting out, in rushes a doctor. Tommy told me after he had to give the doctor four dollars, but the money was nothing to the way he sweated trying to explain.

"The next time I write I hope it'll be better written. I've found a place where I can take night lessons three times a week in history and reading and writing, and you bet I'm taking them.

"With best wishes to everybody and hoping George is getting along all right with his courting.

"W. A. T.

"P.S.—Lucien is showing me how to box every chance we get."

William deliberately omitted from his letter a conversation with Miss Whimple regarding Sally. He had made a special journey to see the lady because he remembered hearing her say something about wonderful cures at a certain hospital to the work of which she had given time and money. She heard him through, touched

by the depth of his feeling for the sufferer, and promised to make inquiries of the surgical staff as to what could be done.

"Don't be too hopeful, William," she said, kindly, "they cannot really tell until they see the patient. But they've done almost everything except furnish new spines; and goodness knows there are many people who ought to have them if they could be made. There are too many jellyfish men and women in the world to-day, William."

CHAPTER XXIII

REFORMATIONS are slow—except when they're sudden. Some reformations—of individuals as well as nations—have followed upon years of effort, toil, and suffering: others have been materially accelerated by the use of the axe. William's acquaintance with the axe was limited to its use as an instrument for occasional spells of firewood-chopping: but at heart he was a reformer, and, unlike most reformers—judging them, of course, by the doubtful value of histories—he started upon himself. Tenacity was William's greatest asset; when he adopted a line of action he "stayed with it," to use his own expressive phraseology. Having found the place spoken of in the letter to Sally, where he could take night lessons in history, reading, and writing, William became an attentive and consistent attendant. Tommy Watson and Whimple were fearful lest he should undertake too much, finally tire of everything, and lapse into a drifter. Epstein ridiculed their fears and scorned their arguments. "Leave the boy

alone," he said, "he knows what he wants, and he'll get it."

There were glorious nights when William longed for a trip on the Bay to the Island, or an hour's loafing in the parks, but when the longing took possession of him on lesson nights he fought it down with firmness, and he usually won. He confided in Epstein occasionally, and the wise old comedian let him talk as long as he wished about it, offering no suggestions or advice. He never went beyond, "Well done, boy," or "Stick to it," but to himself he often said, "He'll do; he'll do."

William neglected his lessons occasionally, as, for instance, once, in the first week of September, but it was in a good cause. He thus explained it to Lucien. "You shoulder seen the Turnpike bunch at the exhibition yesterday."

"So that's where you were. Mr. Whimple said he understood you were engaged on important private business matters."

"Well, he ain't far wrong the way I look at it."

"And were you——?"

"Yes," broke in William, "I was around when the lion broke outter the wild beast show—"

I'm coming to that soon. Pa took the whole bunch of us: he's been taking the whole family since I can remember, and we always have a good time.

"Well, of course it takes Ma about two hours to get the bunch ready—say, ain't kids the worst! I suppose she must have washed off Joey's and Bessie's face four times before we got started. After the second or third time, Pa takes 'em upstairs and makes 'em lie on the bed until the army is ready to advance. 'I've heard about machines for washin' dishes,' he says, 'but it takes a pair of hands and a lot of soap for washin' kiddies' faces, and hands is liable to get tired, so there you stays until Ma's had a chance to get cleaned up,' and they stayed.

"Well, we gets to the grounds about eleven o'clock, and all us kids had a lunch in a box, or a bag, or something, and Ma and Pa had two big baskets fuller grub besides. You'd thought there was enough to last a week. As soon as we gets inside, Pete says he's hungry, he's afraid he can't walk none unless he has something to eat right away. Pete always lays for the grub, you bet. So Pa he lets on he's considering something, but we all know what it is,

because he's played it on us before, and he winds up by taking us down to a swell lunch place near the lake. Honest, it's as clean nearly as our house, and there's mighty few houses that's cleaner. So when Bill Thomson—the man what runs it—sees us coming, he looks mighty solemn, and we all knew what he's going to say, and he says it. 'Ah,' he says, 'there's the Turnpikes what's going to drink up me last drop of tea and all me gingerbeer. Well'—and then he heaves a great sigh—'let 'em come—let 'em all come: it'll ruin me, I know, but somebody always has-ter go under.'

"And Pa says to him to 'cheer up, and how's business?'

"So Bill says it's rotten! the worst in years. So far as he can see he ain't even going to pay expenses, and he wishes he'd let the thing alone. And Pa don't say anything then, but when we've eaten till we can't eat any more, specially Pete, Pa says to Ma, 'Bill Thomson's been runnin' that lunch counter for twenty years, to my knowledge, and he's never made anything on it, to hear him talk. But I notice he's got three nice houses all his own, and a fine trotting horse, and him an express man, too, and I'll bet he

ain't got all the money for them houses outer the express business,' he says.

" 'It's a good business, though,' says Ma.

"And Pa says, 'You bet it is, Ma, it's been good to us anyway.'

"Say, maybe my Pa don't know where to take folks at the exhibition. There's mighty little we didn't see, I'm tellin' you; and chirpin' all the while Pa was too. He's better than a minstrel show to go anywhere with, my Pa is; he'd make even you laugh, Lucien. Well, anyway, along about four o'clock Pa thinks we'd better see oner two of the shows in the midway, so's we can get another meal in good time to see the night doings in fronter the grand stand. So, us to the midway, and we ain't more than half in when we runs across the wild beast show. There's a cage on the platform in front of the show, with a pretty fierce lookin' lion in it, and the spieler he's telling the folks how this lion has eaten four or five people, and he ain't never been sub-dued. 'But,' he says, 'Seenor'r Dan-rell-o will go into his cage at every performance,' he says, 'at the peril of his life.'

"So, a young fellow what's listenin', he says kinder flip, 'Is the peril much?'

"So the showman says he ain't answerin' no fool questions, but if anybody what looks like they had brains is asking in-tell-i-gent questions, he's ready to answer 'em.

"So the young fellow—he's a husky lookin' chap—he says the show's a fake, and the man on the platform gives him a wipe over the head with a whip he had. Then you'd oughter have seen things happen. That young fellow's pal grabs the showman by the legs and pulls him down to the ground and proceeds to hammer him some. The crowd's kinder excited and shovin' around and saying things to each other without knowing what they're doing, when the young fellow what really starts the row lets out a yell you could hear a mile away, and the crowd hushes up kinder sudden; I guess everybody got cold chills down their backs all at once. While they're wondering what's coming next, the fellow puts out his hand and grabs the bars in front of the lion's cage, pulls two or three of them out, and gives that lion the awfulest punch right on the stomach; honest, Lucien, you could hear it like somebody pounding beef-steak to make it tender. Well, everybody comes to their senses, or else loses 'em again,

whichever you like, all of a sudden, and the women that don't faint gets screechin', and the men are hollerin' for the police, and all except them as are laying in faints begins to run. We were pretty well up to the front, and when Pa sees the young fellow pull out the bars he turns kinder white. Then he grabs Dolly and Joey, and says to the rest of us, 'Vamoose ahead quick,' he says, 'though I don't think there's much danger,' and Ma don't say much, but she ain't trying to get far ahead of Pa and we keep turnin' around. At last Pa says, 'No more runnin',' he says, and he puts Dolly and Joey down, takes their hands, and begins to walk back towards the show just as a lot of cops came running up, and so we all go back, and there's that young fellow has the lion by the tail and he's whipping it to beat the band, and making it walk slow up the steps. So, by and by, when things get calmed down again, Pa finds out that them cage bars is wooden ones, and the lion's about forty years old, and honest, Lucien, all its teeth are false, and so's most of its claws, and just about all it can do is to roar and roll around enough to make it look fierce with red lights and all that around it when Seenor

Dan-rell-o goes into the cage. Don't you believe the yarns the newspapers had about that fellow taking his life in his hands and all that. If the police hadn't stopped him he'd likely have taken the lion home and kept it for his kiddies to play with, if he's married.

"Well, Pa says they're ain't much sense paying to see the wild beast show after that, 'cause the best of it is on the outside. The next thing we run across was a show of trained horses. They had a trick mule outside to attract the crowds, and the spieler says the man, woman, or child what can stay on the mule's back one minute gets a dollar and a free ticket to the show. So we watched a few minutes and saw quite a few fellows try, and the mule threw every one before the minute was up. Pa he was kinder fidgetin' and snorting like he thought the triers was a poor bunch, and Ma she says kinder scared like, 'Let's go, Pa;' but Pa he steps forward, and he says low to the man will he let our bunch in if he stays on the mule's back a minute. The man he lets out a blast of a laugh, and he says, 'Ladies and gents,' he says, 'here's a man wants to take a children's home into the show free if he can stay on the mule a minute,' he

says. 'Oh, gather round and see the fun—oh, gather round.' Pete, he's for rushing at the man, but I holds him back, for I see Pa's eyes, and I know that mule's going to be pretty miserable in a few seconds, and the man's going to be worse if he gets off any more of his chin about the family. Of course the mule stands as meek as a sheep while Pa gets on—them trick mules is trained to do that—and the crowd's waitin' for him to throw Pa up in the air, or roll him off, but the second Pa's on that mule's back his hands has a grip on his neck near the jaw, and, b'lieve me, Lucien, that mule began to turn white in the face. It seemed no time before the beast was kinder staggerin' around like a drunk man, and the spieler hollerin' for Pa to let go. 'You win,' he says, 'you win—get off—you can have everything you want. Dang it, man, you're killing that mule.'

"So Pa's pretty busy keeping his grip, but he says, 'I'm trying a new hold,' he says, 'and I'll try it on you next, unless you apol-o-gises.'

"So the man begs Pa's pardon, and ours, and Pa got off, and we all went into the show. It wasn't so bad at that either: any old day any wise guinea thinks he can put one over my

Pa's he's stacking up some trouble for himself.

"Well, we had another meal then, and we ate so much that even Pete was nearly satisfied. He got through the rest of the night on three bags of peanuts, some pop-corn, and some grapes; but that's easy for te, he can eat until he begins to shed buttons off his clothes so fast you'd think it was raining. Then he'll go to school, or out to play, for an hour or so, and back he comes ready for more.

"We saw the grand stand show and the fireworks. Well, it's a pretty good grand stand show this year; but you've seen it, so what's the use spielin' about it? I'm glad I got off to go with the bunch, for I cert'nly had one swell time."

CHAPTER XXIV

THE day before the marriage of Flo Dearmore and Tommy Watson, the latter's assistants in his auctioneering rooms signed a formal and formidable looking agreement, framed by Whimple, and copied in duplicate by one William Adolphus Turnpike. It was William's first piece of type-writing for his boss, and he was mightily proud of it, for it was neatly done, so neatly done in fact that it did not need a single correction. And William's pride was the greater because he was asked to accompany Whimple to the store, there to witness the signing of the agreement. The ceremony was a solemn one—too solemn almost for William—whose efforts to maintain a dignified bearing were almost too much for Tommy. Whimple had no difficulty in maintaining the pose of a lawyer engaged in a serious case, while the assistants were too frightened to be anything else but soberly sheepish. The main clause of the agreement was read over twice, the assistants affirming in timid tones that they knew what it meant, and believed they had

sense enough to live up to it. And it ran something like this:—

“ And we the parties hereinbefore and hereinafter referred to as assistants to Thomas Watson, auctioneer of the said city of Toronto, County of York, do hereby solemnly agree and bind ourselves on our honour to respect such agreement; that we will not during the absence of the said Thomas Watson from his lawful place of business during the period of four weeks dating from the date of this agreement, to which in the presence of witnesses we have signed our names, discuss, argue, talk of, whisper, or shout in the presence of each other, or write or read in the presence of each other, anything relating in any manner to the Battle of Bannockburn or any other battle fought in or out of Scotland or England or elsewhere between armies or forces or individuals of either of the countries named. We also agree that we will not in the presence of each other, by actions or other show that might be so construed, attempt to convey each to the other any thoughts we may have as to such battle, or battles, or conflicts. And we further declare that we know and understand and comprehend the meaning of the foregoing in all respects,

that we are over twenty-one years of age respectively, and are not subject to the control or permission of parents or guardians in entering into the agreement as set forth in the foregoing, and in the succeeding clauses of this agreement."

They signed both copies solemnly, William signed them too, as a witness, and so did Whimple. One copy was nailed to the wall at the back of the store, the other was given to Whimple, who was also given power of attorney by the auctioneer during the absence of Tommy on his honeymoon.

The first wedding that William Adolphus Turnpike ever attended as a guest was that of Tommy Watson and Flo Dearmore. The formal invitation was a startling surprise to the lad. It arrived at his home one morning just as he was about to depart for the office. He read it through three times, and then handed it over to his mother. "Ma," he cried, "look at that!" She read it through, and a blush of pleasure tinged her cheeks as she did so. "A church wedding, Willie, and you invited; and then there's a—a—a de-jun-er. I guess that means a spread at the house of the bride's mother."

"But me! Ma: why, I'd feel like a fish outer

water among the bunch that'll be there, unless," he added thoughtfully, "'Chuck' Epstein goes too, and I can hang onto him."

The time between the reception of the invitation and the wedding was a trying one for William. He worried about what he should wear—and his choice was rather limited—but he worried more about what he should give, "For," said his mother, "you'll have to give the bride something: everybody does that when they're invited to a wedding." In the crisis of his dilemma over this proposition William consulted "Chuck" Epstein, and the result of their deliberations was the sending to the prospective bride of a parrot "that could talk to beat the band," as William said. Epstein never told him that he had himself paid the original owner of the parrot a larger amount than William could spare, and had arranged with him to accept the sum that the boy offered. And of all the gifts that Flo Dearmore received from others but the man of her choice, that parrot pleased her most, "For," said she, "he is the slangiest bird imaginable, and sometimes he uses swear words—just like my Tommy."

The wedding, which took place at "high

noon" in an Anglican church, was a wonderful experience for William. With "Chuck" Epstein, he had a good seat near the altar, and many were the smiles and knowing nods exchanged between other invited guests at the evident eagerness of the lad to take in all the proceedings. And yet no other person, perhaps, in the assembly—and it was a large one—felt more than William the real solemnity of the ceremony. He was not very clear as to his exact feelings, but the dignity of the rector, the simple beauty of the marriage ritual, the singing of the choir, the love light in the eyes of the bride and of Tommy, combined to impress him profoundly. He smiled once, in fact he scarcely suppressed a snicker, but a warning touch of Epstein's hand aided him to control himself.

The "dejeuner" almost put him "on the blink," he declared afterwards. He was conscious only of two things: first, that the bride, amid all the sweet confusion and merriment incidental to the occasion, found time to introduce him to several ladies as "the dearest and cleverest boy I know, next to Tommy," and that when the toasts were proposed he had to make a speech. Epstein assisted him to stand,

for the lad was overwhelmed with embarrassment that amounted to fear. He never knew just what he said at first, but when he recovered sufficiently to realise that the faces turned toward him were kindly, and the smiles were encouraging, his self-possession returned. Observant always, and quick to see the right thing to do, William hoped that "Mister Watson and his wife would live happy ever after, and," he concluded, with a smile that was full of confidence, "I nearly snickered once when the marriage was on. That was when the minister says something about, 'Do you, Thomas Watson, take this woman for your wife?' or words something like that, and I says to myself, 'Does he! Gee! And him looney about——'" The rest was lost in a breeze of laughter and joyous acclamations.

Afterwards there was more hustle and bustle, and finally the bride and groom started for the railway station, with all the accompaniments considered so necessary to start newly wedded couples on such journeys. Others may have noticed, William certainly did, that though she smiled, there were tears in Mrs. Dearmore's eyes as she stood at the doorstep and waved her

hands in farewell. And, as he left for the office, William was thinking of that. "It means a lot for her," he said to himself—"a lot. She—why—Flo will be—" he paused—"of course, of course, it's always the way. It'll never be the same again for Mrs. Dearmore, or Flo, or Tommy. This is a rummy world."

Later in the day he dropped into Tommy Watson's store and found the assistants engaged in the hottest kind of argument. They took no notice of him at all; indeed, they did not know he was there. He listened for a few minutes, wrathful and unhappy, because he felt that this was the time above all others when Tommy's business should be attended to with diligence and enthusiasm, and then, still unnoticed, he stole out of the store and ran back to the office. Whimple was not in, and William, hastily glancing over his employer's daily reminder, made a bee line for the county court. Here he found Whimple, having just successfully emerged from a case in which he had defended a man accused of theft, chatting with the county crown attorney.

"Excuse me, Mister Whimple," said William, abruptly, "but them guys are at it again."

"Meaning——?" began Whimple.

"In Tommy Watson's store," William went on hurriedly, "and, honest, it's fierce. I was in and out the store, and neither of 'em even looked at me."

Whimple bade adieu to the crown attorney, and started away with William.

"What are they fighting about now, William?" said Whimple, disgustedly, as he hurried along the street with William by his side.

"Home r'rule fer I'r'r'reland or 'ome rule for Hireland! I don't know just which," answered William with a smile.

CHAPTER XXV

SOME chronicles are so burdened with matters that are irrelevant as to cause to those who have an eye for the main story and nothing else much trouble and more annoyance. But in this, the true chronicle of events in one period of the life of William Adolphus Turnpike, only that which is of importance has been dealt with. This is almost a superfluous explanation, for the reader who has managed to keep awake thus far has long ago become seized of the fact. There lapses between what has gone before and what is here written a period of nearly five years. Happy years they had been to William and the Turnpike "bunch." The elder Turnpike's business prospered exceedingly, and William was well advanced towards his cherished goal. Whimple and Tommy had long ceased to worry over him, for the lad was developing into a sturdy and healthy youth, taller than the average, still on the slim side, but strong and sinewy. There was little grace about his movements, though he had developed in courtesy and consideration to a surprising degree. He

sometimes worried over his lack of graceful movements. "I've stood in front of the glass many a time," he said to Epstein, "and practised trying to be graceful, but it's no go. I'm as awkward as a duck; what'll I do?"

"Nothing," said Epstein, gravely, "nothing, my boy. It will be best for you if you are always naturally as awkward as you are to-day. Many comedians have tried for years to acquire what you have as a gift of nature. It's a great asset." And William took the old man's word for it. "You know best," he said emphatically, "and whatever you say goes."

Epstein smiled happily. The old comedian did not seem to have aged very much in the five years. He declared he felt younger, in fact. Between him and William there had grown a friendship strong and complete. The lad trusted implicitly in the man: his gratitude to him was unbounded, he evinced it by his attention to the lessons, still continued, by every little thing he could do to show that the tuition, so unselfishly given, was bearing good fruit. It was hard drilling often: there were days and weeks when the heart of William was torn with doubts and fears, but always when it seemed

that he could not bear the strain, he tackled his tasks once more with the determination his friends had so often noted, and the difficulties would fly, the rocky path become smooth, and the heart of William would rejoice in another victory.

Whimble's business had attained quite respectable proportions now. He was able to pay William a fairly good salary, and the lad was earning it, for he had adopted as his motto one of Tommy Watson's proverbs: "The man who earns what he gets is a dub; the fellow who always does more than he's paid for gets to the winning post first." Whimble himself, on the shrewd advice of his aunt, had bought and re-sold to excellent advantage pieces of property in the rapidly developing suburbs, and was beginning to be known as an expert on law in regard to property. He had also, on the advice of his heart, and without consulting any one but the lady herself, married Mrs. Stewart, and William was almost as proud of his "boss" for doing that as he was of his own ability to keep the books and do all the clerical work of the office.

There was a new Watson too—you have

guessed that, of course. A one-year-old image of Tommy, who would have had half the doctors and all the trained nurses in town at the new-comer's advent, if his friends had not restrained him.

And Tommy, who, at the time of his marriage, had considered himself fairly well able to meet all current demands on his purse, and even to retire and live in reasonable comfort on what he had managed to put away, got cold feet as soon as he realised that he was a father. The first cry from Tommy junior brought the cold sweat to the brow of the auctioneer, who was sitting in his home "den" awaiting news from his wife's room. He stole softly downstairs and made his way to the verandah, in the belief that some of the neighbour's children were playing there, and bent upon driving them away. But there were no youngsters on the verandah, and Tommy, with a sudden realisation of the meaning of that cry, went back to the den, grinning foolishly, and hungrier than ever for news. When the doctor finally came to him with a hearty, "Well, Dad, there's a bouncing Tommy junior to look after now," Tommy asked first, "How is she?"

"Fine," answered the doctor.

"And the kiddo's a boy?"

"Yes," said the doctor, "and he's a dandy; you can see 'em both soon," he added, as he left the room.

"Me a father!" said Tommy to himself.

"Me! Oh, joy—and a boy!" He seized the cushions on the lounge and threw them up to the ceiling joyously. "If I was at the store," he said aloud, and addressing the cushions, "I'd use you to smash something with."

Then he took a writing pad and began to cover it with figures, and the more he figured, the less pleased he seemed to be with the results. Finally, "Ahem," said Tommy, "I've got to work now: this'll never do; can't let the wife and kiddy want for anything. Wonder what we'll have to get for him first?" And after more figuring, "Well, it's no good getting cold feet over the proposition: it's me with me nose to the grindstone, and I guess I can stand it for some years yet."

There was joy in his store when he arrived there the next morning, proudly happy. Epstein and Whimple were there, and they greeted him with dignified pleasure. The Scottish and

English assistants, who were still at loggerheads over the battle of Bannockburn, were no less sincere in their congratulations. When Jimmy Duggan, M.P.P., called to add the compliments of the People's Party, Tommy was fairly beaming. Oh, but it was good to have such friends. But the congratulations that touched him most of all were those of William and Lucien, who called together. The youths were embarrassed, they hardly knew what to say, and what they did say was incoherent. But Tommy knew the kindness of the hearts that had prompted the call, and he blew his nose and shuffled his feet uneasily as the boys, after an awkward silence, departed.

Lucien and William were fast friends now. The former was still with Simmons, the architect, who, like Whimple, was beginning to achieve success, and now occupied a separate office suite. He was growing fast; was stouter than William, much slower in action and speech, and was giving promise of developing into a successful business man. William had confided his plans to Lucien long ago, and had been delighted with the real interest with which they had been received. They often talked about them, and

Lucien had even given some suggestions that William had acted upon and found to be good. And one day Lucien had completed his conquest of the coming comedian by a simple remark. William, in a more than usual friendly outburst of confidence, had built castles in the air, based on his conviction of attaining success.

"And if," said Lucien, "you should become a famous and wealthy actor, and have a theatre of your own—I—I——" he looked at William wistfully.

"Yes, Lucien."

"Wouldn't it be nice if—if—I was architect enough to design it for you? I—I would like——"

"Oh, Lucien!" That was all William said, but Lucien laughed happily.

CHAPTER XXVI

JIMMY DUGGAN, too, had been doing things during the years. In the early days of his first session of the legislature Jimmy was regarded as something of a joke by government and opposition sides alike, and by the press of both parties. He was constantly referred to in the newspapers as "Mr. Duggan, the People's Party," and when it came to recording votes on various questions there was sure to be a note to the effect that "The People's Party voted solidly" for or against the proposal, or Bill, or amendment, as the case might be. And Jimmy rather liked it. In the course of time he became thoroughly acquainted with "all the boys" in the press gallery. The embarrassment of his detachment from either of the straight political parties was a strong factor in ripening his friendship with the "gallery," and very soon the reporters began to welcome his advent to the writing room, a well-like structure between the actual press gallery and one of the galleries used by the public. For Jimmy had an amazing fund of stories, and knew how to tell them, and

he also knew that there were times when silence was imperative, and on such occasions he smoked his pipe and marvelled while the reporters turned out reams of copy for their newspapers.

To the leaders of the respective parties Jimmy was a real puzzle. They made overtures to him, by proxy, of course. Far be it from any leader of any political party to ever care one red cent whether an independent, real or imitation, would consider throwing in his lot with a party. Far be it, but—well, the overtures were made, and Jimmy received the envoys who bore them on separate occasions with cordiality. One envoy reported that Jimmy would support his party through thick and thin, and the other reported, "We have him, hide and boot and all." He was no chicken—Jimmy.

There was some curiosity as to when Jimmy would make his first speech in the House, and on what subject. The press gallery, to a man, was willing to bet that it would be interesting, and not one-hundredth part so long as the first speech made by "The Big Wind." Attempts to pump Jimmy were of no avail, for he declared with emphatic words and gestures that he didn't

know. "All I'm sure of," he said, "is that I'll make one some day, if I don't drop dead of heart disease when I get up to speak. I hope it'll be some nice quiet afternoon; there's too many folks here at nights to suit me."

"Well, but you addressed far larger audiences during your campaign," said one of the reporters.

"Yes," answered Jimmy, "but it was a different crowd; most of the bunch that comes to the galleries here at nights are pretty keen politicians. Lots of 'em have been coming for years. They know all the points of order, and everything like that, and because I'd know that they knew I was tearing holes in the rules of the House, and the English language, I'd likely feel that I'd better not take a fling. But, what's the use of talking?—I don't know what I'll say or do. Did any of you fellows know Father LeRoy, down our way, who died a little while ago?"

Some of them had known him.

"Well, fifteen years or so ago, there was a gang of housebreakers and burglars that got on people's nerves. They pulled off many a robbery, beat up a number of people, and had

the whole district terrorised. The police didn't seem able to get on to any good clues, though goodness knows they worked hard. Well, it got so that people were afraid to leave anything worth while in their houses when they went to church services. So they stayed at home more frequently than usual. Father LeRoy felt pretty bad about his own people who did this, and prayed for an end to 'the plague,' as he called it. He was sorrowful, too, about the robberies, because he had a sneaking suspicion that some of his own parishioners were mixed up in them, and he was right.

"He wasn't much of a man for size, the Father, and was known to have displayed any great strength, but he had a bright, keen eye, a firm step, and a hearty hand-shake that showed he was healthful, anyway.

"After mass one Sunday, I shook hands with him at the door—he was always there for a word before we went—and I says to him, 'Father, you'll be having the gang breaking into your house first thing you know.'

"He laughed kind of easy, and says, 'Well, if they come, I hope they'll be peaceable, for, above all things, I am a man of peace.'

“ ‘And if they’re not?’ I says.

“And he shrugged his shoulders—that was the French of him from his father—and says, ‘I don’t know what I’d do, but I’d do the best I could.’

“Sure enough, they did break into the Father’s house the next night, three of them, and they got into his room on the second floor, and woke him up from his sleep, because they couldn’t find anything worth stealing. They stood beside his bed, three hulking brutes they were, and threatened him with fearful things if he didn’t at once get up and show them the gold and silver plate they believed was in the house. So he got up kinder quietly, and put some of his clothes on, and all the while they were saying very soft-like awful things about the church, and Father LeRoy wasn’t saying anything, but all of a sudden he turns the key easily in the door, locking it on the inside, you see, and slips the key in his pocket. Then he looks at them, and they’re very close to him and very fierce, and one of ’em says, ‘We smashed old Tom’s head’—that was the Father’s servant—‘just because he opened his mouth to yell, and now we’ll pound yours to a pulp,’ and the next minute

that fellow went down with a broken jawbone and a stomach that never got well again, I guess. The others threw themselves upon the Father, and a few minutes afterwards the whole neighbourhood was awakened by the yells and shoutings from the house. People and police were soon there: they broke into the house and burst into the Father's room, and there he was, a little pale and breathing heavy, and the three men piled on the floor in a heap, moaning and groaning, and all covered with blood. I was one of them that rushed in with the police, and when things got quietened down a bit I found old Tom in the kitchen with a pretty sore head, but not in danger. Well, one of the police inspectors and me stayed the rest of the night with the Father, though he didn't want us to.

"The inspector shook the Father's hand about a million times, and he says to him, 'Sir,' he says, 'what did you think when you locked that Joor?'

"And Father LeRoy said very slow, 'I thought to myself, I don't know what I'll do, but I'll do the best I can.'

" 'You can take it from me,' says the inspector, 'and I'm an Ulster Orangeman at that, there

isn't a man on the force to-day could have done better,' and he shook the Father's hand again.

"Maybe," concluded Jimmy, "nobody'll ever want to shake my hand after my first speech, and give me praise, but I'll do the best I can, anyway."

The Honorable the Provincial Secretary gave Jimmy his first chance in the annual statement on the hospitals, charities, and prisons of the province. The Secretary dilated at some length on the reasonable prices at which supplies had been obtained, particularly coal and wood. The opposition attacked the Secretary's statement on general grounds. They always did that, anyway: obviously, anything that the government did must be wrong, and the debate that followed dragged along for two or three days, until even the most incompetent men in the House had said something about it, and had kicked because their speeches did not get more space in the newspapers. The House was tired to death of the discussion, and there was a joyous trooping in of members when the whips sent word that a vote was in sight on an opposition resolution that the salary list of the Provincial Secretary's Department should be

cut in half. But the end was not yet. Just as the Speaker began to put the question Jimmy rose. A half-suppressed groan rose with him, for the members were really tired. Jimmy heard it, but he only smiled.

"On behalf of the People's Party," he said, "I would like to ask the Honorable the Provincial Secretary a question or two before the vote is taken, and I presume he'll answer them."

"Cheerfully," said the Honorable, who was smiling.

"I would like to ask then, Mr. Speaker," said Jimmy, "if the honorable gentleman knows anything about coal, or the coal business."

"I do not."

"He is advised by his officials, I presume?"

"I am"—no one was paying any attention to the Speaker now—the questions and answers were being exchanged straight across the floor of the House.

"The honorable gentleman stated," went on Jimmy, "that at last the Toronto coal ring had been checkmated, and he had made a thoroughly good bargain with Howilton dealers."

"Yes."

"Does he happen to know that the Howilton

men turned over their contract to the Toronto ring? "

There was a pause. The Provincial Secretary looked his surprise, but sat still.

"Because that is the case," proceeded Jimmy, calmly. "In fact, the Howilton companies that got the contract are owned by the Toronto ring, anyway."

The Provincial Secretary rose hastily, and as hastily expressed the opinion that the honorable member for Mid-Toronto was mistaken. "It is a grave charge he makes," he said, "and I do not think it has any real foundation."

Jimmy ignored for a moment the challenge as to his veracity. "The Howilton companies," he said, "are owned by the Toronto ring. But if the Provincial Secretary had known it, he could have been independent of the ring." He paused, but the Provincial Secretary was sitting gloomily silent. "There are at least three new coal firms in this city," said Jimmy, "that are out of the ring, and they could have filled the orders at still smaller prices than the government paid. But the government chose to send out circulars on its old lists, on which the names of the new companies do not appear, instead

of advertising for tenders, and giving all a chance, and the government has been stung—that's all."

The opposition members were pounding their desks as Jimmy sat down. The government side was silent. The Provincial Secretary rose and declared in solemn tones that he would ask "to-morrow" that a committee of the House be named to investigate the whole matter, and he hoped the honorable gentleman would bring all the facts in his possession before it.

"I will," said Jimmy, laconically, and he did, with the result that the government got a rare black eye that set it rolling down the Hill of Overthrow, at the bottom of which, a few years later, it landed, and landed hard.

"I did my best, anyway," said Jimmy, when, the House having risen, the reporters gathered around him to compliment him on his maiden speech.

CHAPTER XXVII

SALLY MILLER was able to walk a little now—a very little—but firmly, and without the effort and the pain that the journey around the table had cost her in the old days. She was living with Miss Whimple, who had insisted on it from the day the doctors had declared the girl fit to be removed from the hospital. There was no certainty of an absolute cure: the doctors could not promise that, but, with every month, the hope of ultimate recovery strengthened. She had been a long time in the hospital, nearly two years, before the signs of improvement were marked enough to admit of encouragement. She was a good patient, Sally: her cheerfulness and animation, her belief and trust in the doctors and the nurses won their hearts. There were many black hours for her; home-sickness, pain, doubt, these were hard things to bear. In the still of the night she often lay sleepless, fighting with the sorrow and longing that oppresses, and striving to repress the exclamations that pain brought to her lips. And she

won. "She always was a winner," William used to say, "and always will be."

There were no lack of visitors to Sally during her stay in the hospital. Her own relations made frequent trips to the city to see her. Miss Whimple was her most constant caller, and the next was—not William. He did manage to call often, but not so often as Lucien, and, somehow, Sally began to look forward to Lucien's visits with delightful thrills of anticipation. Miss Whimple smiled about it, and William laughed. Sally smiled, too, but, such a smile! She enjoyed William's visits immensely. He was seldom serious with her, and he always had funny stories to tell. In fact, he clothed the most commonplace incidents of the day with humour when he spoke of them, and shamelessly invented stories when he had no actual foundations on which to build them. And Sally always knew when he was spinning yarns, and William knew that she did. Miss Whimple was rather disappointed over William's attitude toward the girl, and so expressed herself to Epstein one day. The old comedian displayed unwonted heat in his answer. "Such foolishness," he said sharply, "give the lad a

chance. There is a great career before William. If he begins thinking of love, or thinks he is thinking seriously of love now, it will be the end for him. I hope you have not been trying to put any such nonsensical ideas into his head."

Miss Whimple did not answer. The gruffness of the old man hurt a little. He was quick to understand her silence, and after a while said gently, "I beg your pardon: I did not mean to be angry, I—I—the boy and his future are very dear to me—you—I——"

She laid a hand on his arm. "I know—I know," she said. "I'm a foolish old ma'. You are right about William, but, sometimes, those who have lost much dream pleasant dreams and build fairy castles for those who help to make their sorrow easier to bear." And then they talked of other things, of William's future, of Epstein's success, of Tommy Watson's boy.

Meanwhile, Sally was sitting on the verandah of Miss Whimple's home, going over again to herself all the memories of her first meeting with Lucien. She had been three months in the hospital when William had brought him to her, and was sitting up in bed dressing dolls for a

Christmas-tree for the infant patients in the institution. William came to the bedside with his usual easy air. Lucien hung back a little, shy, embarrassed, and blushing. William took hold of his sleeve and dragged him forward. "Allow me, Miss Sally Miller," he said, with a smile, "to introduce to you Lucien Torrance—Lucien Wellington Torrance, to give him his full name. Mister Torrance—Miss Miller."

They shook hands gravely, and eyed each other in silence.

"This," went on William, in a more serious tone, "this, Sally, is the chap I used to think was a mutt—honest—until I woke up one day and found that I was it. I was the M-U-T-T," he spelled out the word, "and Lucien had me beaten a mile for brains and bravery."

Lucien was blushing furiously now. "Don't," he pleaded.

William ignored the remark, and smiling, again proceeded, "Honest, Sally, he's a pippin, is Lucien. Why, first thing we know he'll be the boss architect of Canada, and the real thing in inventions too. He's always trying his hand at something; and he'll come out ahead, will Lucien."

Sally murmured a hope that he would.

"Oh, you needn't be afraid to speak up, Sally," said William, gaily. "You can't phase Lucien. He'll listen to you until the cows come home—he's a good listener, and," he laid one arm affectionately on Lucien's shoulder, "he's a good doer, too, is my friend Lucien."

Lucien came frequently after that, and often alone. He never had much to say, and yet Sally felt after his visits as though he had said a great deal. He thought much of her, and the first practical outcome of his thinking was the invention of an ingenious little table that could be mounted on the bed, and moved easily by the patient, so that she could use it as a book support, or a table on which to lay the trifles she made for the little children. William saw it the first day Sally used it, questioned her closely, took the table back to Lucien, and gave him no rest until there had been a consultation with Whimble and the first steps had been taken toward patenting the invention. It is in use by every hospital almost in the world now, but few recall that a boy then barely seventeen years of age invented it.

And as Sally thought of the past, she saw

Lucien coming steadily up the pathway toward her. He greeted her with a quiet, "How are you?" and sat beside her on the verandah. It was almost dark, but warm, and a gentle breeze tempered the atmosphere that throughout the day had been oppressive. From the verandah the central portion of the city to the Bay was stretched out in long regular streets, marked by the glimmering of electric lights. Beyond the wharves the lights of the Island, sentinel like, marked the indented shore facing the city, and beyond that again there flickered faintly from Lake Ontario the lights of a few steamers, some of them pleasure craft, others bearing burdens of freight from, or toward, the sea-ports.

In silence they watched for a long time. It was Lucien who spoke first. "Toronto is growing fast," he said, "it will soon be all built up around here: and it is a fine city—I—I love it—I love it. Some day—I'm foolish, though——"

"Some day," she echoed.

"Some day—I—I—hope I may do something to help to make it a greater city still. Work for one's self isn't everything. Father often

talks to me of 'the public good.' 'Every man,' he says, 'should take an intelligent interest in the affairs of his own municipality, and any man who can serve his city in even a humble capacity should be proud to do it.' "

"And you will, Lucien—I know you will." He took one of her hands and held it in his own, and again they sat silent.

"I must go," he said, at last. "Good-night, Sally."

"Good-night," she said, gently.

He rose, and, looking down at her, he said abruptly, "William's going soon; did you know?"

"Mr. Epstein said he thought it would be soon."

"He told me to-day that Mr. Epstein had found a place for him in a good company that will go on the road this fall, after a two weeks' engagement here. He has only a small part, of course, but he regards it as his chance, and he's quite delighted. Next summer he'll come back to give all his time to study again. Good-night."

"Good-night, Lucien."

He turned after he reached the pathway,

and called, "It'll be slow without William, won't it?"

"Yes," she answered, and to herself, "but it would be slower without you, Lucien."

On his way to the street car he passed Miss Whimple and Epstein and exchanged greetings with them. When they resumed their walk toward Miss Whimple's house, the old comedian asked her, "Did you notice what he was whistling as he came along?"

"Not particularly."

"Listen: there he is again." And faint, but clear and sweet, she heard it.

"'Sally in our Alley,'" she said, laughingly.

"Yes," answered Epstein with a chuckle.

"The dear lad," said Miss Whimple, "he's a fine fellow. And the dear girl, the dear girl, God help her to a perfect cure."

CHAPTER XXVIII

WILLIAM was William, the fun lover, still; you must not think otherwise. True, he regarded his work more seriously than in the days when he first engaged himself as office boy to Whimple, and his persistency, determination, and devotion to his studies under the tuition of Epstein were beginning, as hereinbefore chronicled, to bear fruit. But William was William still: you read that before; it is necessary, perhaps, to emphasise it. An irrepressible love of fun, and a cheerful temper, continued to be his great assets; he radiated sunshine as of yore. But back of all was a tender heart; a heart that was rich in sympathy, and was ever responsive to appeals for help or comfort. To his mother he continued to be a sort of puzzle; she never really understood him, in fact, and his successes always came as a surprise to her. Pete, curly-headed and sturdy, with his fondness for fighting, his love of schoolboy sports, and his healthy appetite, she could understand. But William; she used to look at him sometimes when he was "cheering up the bunch,"

and wonder if she would ever just know how much of it was earnest and just what was put on.

This attitude of his mother's troubled William more than anything else at this period. His love for her was unalloyed by any feeling toward any other woman or girl of his acquaintance; he often called her his "sweetheart." He was more gentle toward her than any other member of the household, with the exception of little deaf and dumb Dorothy, and he continually sought her advice in matters of family interest. Yet he knew that she brooded over him often; and because he knew the reason of it, so keen was his intuition, he tried to reveal the real William to her more completely than to any one else.

Miss Whimple came nearer to "diagnosing" William than any of the women who knew him at this time.

"I've seen that boy," she said to Sally, "give his last cent to help people in distress: I've known him to go to trouble that would worry a grown man in order to assist some shiftless body to get a position, for his trust in people is not easily shaken. But we'll never know the real William until—until——"

Sally waited, and in a little while Miss Whimple went on. "Just now, and for a long time to come, I think, his mind will be so strongly set upon success on the stage that he will not allow anything to come between. And, if his health remains good, it seems to me that our fondest hopes for him in that direction will fall far short of the realisation. But one day, Sally Miller, there will come to William that which comes to every one of us sooner or later."

"Yes."

"Yes," said Miss Whimple, so low that the girl hardly caught the words, "yes—love will come to William. It will have to fight its way over many barriers, but in the end his heart will be carried by storm. Then we will know a new William Adolphus Turnpike, or some of you younger folks will, for I'm too old to be expecting that the good Lord will let me live to see that, and William in love will be worth seeing. You know," she continued in a lighter tone, "I asked him one day just a little while ago if he had a sweetheart, and he looked at me with that gleam in his eyes we all know so well as he answered, 'Sure!'"

"'Who is it?' I asked.

" ' You'd know as much as I do if I told you,' he said.

" That made me angry, of course, and I told him he was lucky enough to be too big for me to thrash, as I tried to do the first time I saw him; and you should have seen him grin.

" ' Miss Whimple,' said he, ' I'll never forget you and the parasol as long as I live. Say, it was——' but I broke in with, ' Now, who is your sweetheart, William? ' and what do you think he said? "

" ' Mother.' "

" Exactly! And I knew he was serious about it, too, though, like a foolish old woman, I must needs go on to tell him that a boy of his age ought to have a real sweetheart. Well, presently he became very quiet, his mouth set firmly, as it does when he is thinking hard, and he looked straight at me. ' Miss Whimple, you know what real love is,' he said. ' I hope when it comes to me I'll be as worthy of it and as true as you have been,' and then — why, he was the real William again in a flash. ' Say,' he said, ' why don't you go out to a ball game once in a while? Lots of ladies go, and the way the Torontos are playing this season it looks like they'd be

champions again for the second time in four years. Honest, they've got me wild, and Tommy Watson's crazier than I am. He can't go to the games as often as he used to, because he's looney about his wife and little Tommy too. So, when I go and he doesn't I have to tell the whole story of the game to him, and—say, excuse me, I'll just have time to get to the grounds to see the last four innings,' and away he went.

"Once I asked Whimple if William had a girl, and he told me the boy was too busy. That's the kind of a fool answer a man makes when he either doesn't know, or does know and won't tell. Then he told me about a trick that Tommy Watson and himself played on William, only it didn't work out in the way they expected. It puzzles me to know how men find time to go into such silliness. Between them they wrote a letter, in a disguised hand, of course, and supposedly from a girl to William. He had been taking part in one of the amateur performances that Epstein arranged for the Children's Hospital, and the letter declared that the writer had been so touched by the wonderful ability displayed by William that she felt she might be forgiven

if she did so unmaidenly a thing as to ask for a personal interview. William got the letter—the over-grown boys saw to that—read it through carefully, stowed it away in one of his pockets, and—well, as Tommy Watson says, he just sat tight.

“A few days afterwards they wrote another, to which William was to send a reply to a certain post-office box. But there was no sign of an answer. A third letter was written, imploring the recipient to have mercy, or words to that effect, and two days afterwards a detective called on Whimple and Tommy Watson. He found them together in Tommy's store and opened the conversation with the hope that they were not writing any more love letters. They were dumbfounded. Before they could even think of an explanation the detective warned them in his most official manner that the gentleman whom they were annoying by their devotion to the art of letter-writing had decided that on receipt of further epistles he would institute proceedings, and start with a full statement to the press on the matter, including the names of the letter writers.

“They had sense enough to take the hint,

anyway, and enough sense left over to keep from talking to William about it. I asked Whimple if William had ever referred to the subject, and he said not directly. But one afternoon he found one of the letters lying on his desk. He took it to Tommy Watson, who told him he had found one on his desk too."

"I wonder what Tommy said about it?" said Sally.

"Oh! he had one of his made-to-order proverbs on hand, to be sure. He said, 'Well, you know what our old friend Shakespeare said, "It's a wise old one that gets ahead of a bright young one."'"

"He's really clever, is William," commented Sally.

"Yes, and like all clever people he is sometimes taken in. But I'll say this much for him, he isn't easily gold-bricked, and he learns the lessons of experience thoroughly. He's like his 'Pa' in that respect, and he's as loyal to his 'Pa' as ever. In all the time I have known him he's looked upon his 'Pa' as the smartest man he knows."

"Yes," said Sally, smiling. "Whenever he wants to impress one as to the cleverness of some

other person he brings in 'Pa,' and he always adds, 'It's a wise guinea who can put one over on my Pa.' "

"It is, too," said Miss Whimple. 'Pa' Turnpike is one of the shrewdest men I ever met, and one of the kindest too. William and 'the bunch'—can't you imagine you hear him saying it, Sally?—'the bunch' are proud of 'Pa,' and they have a right to be."

CHAPTER XXIX

WHAT should be left out of a chronicle dealing with the actual events and sayings of real people? This chronicler does not know, and, as a consequence, omissions from the true and unvarnished record of the people hereinbefore dealt with are the consequences of guesses rather than of deliberate and judicious or injudicious selections. Readers may argue that out for themselves. Nothing has been said, for instance, of the triumph of Pete Turnpike over the mules owned by his father, and the day he rode them, circus fashion, with a foot on each mule, down one of the principal streets; the charge of "obstructing" that followed; the hearing of the same in the police court, and Pete's dismissal with a warning on account of his tender years, which latter, however, did not save him from chastisement by Turnpike pater. Nor has anything been said of Pete's conversion during a revival meeting; his exhortations to the family to follow his course, until he almost drove them insane, and his fall from grace when a new boy at the school declared he could lick Pete with one

hand tied behind his back. He loudly, and willingly, changed his opinion after Pete got through with him; nay, he admitted that if Pete had been hobbled and blind of one eye he would not have stood a chance against him. But, somewhere, there should be found room to tell of William's encounter and subsequent relations with a judge of the Common Pleas Division of the High Court of Justice, because, in after years—well, never mind that part of it.

In the course of his work William was frequently in the law courts, and one sultry September afternoon, this was in the first year of his engagement with Whimple, he got into an argument with the office boy of another lawyer on the merits of the Toronto baseball team. William bore himself tolerably well, until he was told that he knew as much about baseball as a hog's foot, and was, without doubt, the sassiest "four-flusher" in the city of Toronto. "I may be a four-flusher," said William, calmly, "but I ain't allowing any pie-face loafer your size to say it," and he smacked the boy's cheek. A hot encounter followed, the contestants being so determined to rub each other's head through the stone flooring of the corridor that they did

not notice his lordship, the judge, with the officials of the court around him, come from the court room. They noticed nothing, in fact, until a deputy sheriff fell over them as they rolled on the floor. The deputy sheriff rose hastily, and angrily, and drew one foot back to plant a kick on the first part of boyish anatomy that he could reach, when the judge, robes and all, stooped down, grasped each boy by the neck, and placed him on his feet. Still retaining his hold, he looked at the boys somewhat sternly—if the mouth was an index of his thoughts, but if his eyes—anyway, William saw his eyes first, and smiled.

The judge was a surprisingly young man for a judge. In his day he had been a champion boxer and football player. It was whispered, indeed, that no boxing bout of importance since his appointment had been without his presence as a spectator. He regarded William gravely. "He smiles," he said solemnly, "smiles in the presence of the august court whose serenity he has seen fit to disturb." The other boy was blubbering, and to him the judge said, "This coming man realises the enormity of his crime. He weeps the bitter tears of one discovered.

He repents his misdeeds. Officer," to the deputy sheriff, "take the names of these disturbers of the peace. Upon their fitting punishment I will ponder." He relaxed his hold and passed on.

A day or two later he ran across William in the corridor. This time his lordship was without the robes, and in street attire looked younger than ever. His smile of recognition brought an answering smile from William. The 'ad would have passed on, but the judge stopped him. "Still at liberty, I see," he said.

"Yes, sir."

"Um—see that you remain worthy of it: it's a precious thing, liberty." Then, "And now, in my unofficial capacity, would you mind telling me the cause of the desperate encounter of the other day?"

The twinkle in the judge's eyes reassured William. "Well, sir," he said, "that fellow said the Torontos was selling games. He said they had it all fixed about who was to win the pennant before the season started."

The judge, himself a baseball fan, looked up and down the corridor, and thus addressed

William. "Did — er — that is to say — did you——" he paused.

William, one palm outspread, the other falling on it in rhythm to the words, his eyes sparkling, asserted—"Honest, judge, I walloped him for fair. When we got outside he starts all over again, so I herds him into a lane and we had it out. Gee!" reflectively, "he was tough, but I did him up all right."

His lordship waved a hand deprecatingly. "Enough, enough, boy," he said, solemnly. Then, in a lighter tone, "Didn't I see you at the game a week ago Saturday?"

"You did, you did, sir, I sat right behind you, and—and——"

"Go on."

"I guess I slapped your back when you got kinder excited in the——"

"Seventh innings, with the score three to nothing for Montreal, Torontos with two men on bases and nobody out"—the judge was talking rapidly now—"big Bill Hannigan at the bat, and——"

"What did Hannigan do to the ball," William broke in, "but slam it over the fence for a home run, bringing in the two on bases and

tying the score! Oh, joy!" A clerk of the court who came out of his office at this moment snickered audibly at the sight of a boy doing a little war dance in the corridor and a judge smiling approvingly.

Throughout the years that followed, the judge and William maintained a friendly relationship. His lordship was eventually admitted into the secret of William's ambition, though it was not until their acquaintanceship had lasted three years that he took it seriously, and then he never failed to urge William to "stick to it." From Whimple, and later from "Chuck" Epstein, he obtained further light, and, on the comedian's invitation, attended two or three of the amateur entertainments in which William had a part.

Epstein was chary in consenting to William appearing in the cast of such entertainments, and William could not be persuaded to do anything in this regard unless Epstein favoured it. Afterwards, they would go over the performance together, Epstein in the rôle of critic, and the old man's suggestions and advice and William's own observations and descriptions of his emotions, and his reasons for this or that

slight departure from the lines and action originally mapped out, aided in the making of the William Adolphus Turnpike so beloved of the theatre-goers to-day.

The judge enjoyed those performances, and he rather surprised Epstein and William both by making suggestions in respect to some of them that were valuable and illuminating. "How did you come to think of that?" asked Epstein curiously, in regard to one idea advanced by the judge.

"I think," answered his lordship, slowly, "that a court is the best of dramatic schools. It is so real, too; there is much of tragedy and a great deal of comedy too—unconscious, a lot of it. I have always been rather keenly interested in the study of the people who came before me, particularly in criminal cases. It seems to me that there is still a wide field for a play."

There was a long pause. Epstein, who was looking keenly at the judge, broke in. "There is," he said, "there is—and you could write it, your lordship."

The judge started. "Do you think so?" he asked, somewhat sharply.

Epstein nodded. And now, of course, the

reader of this chronicle has guessed the identity of the author of the play in which William made his first appearance as a "Star." Yes — a judge—hiding under a *nom-de-plume*, a judge of the High Court, no less, wrote *Our High Court*, that most delightful of the comedies of our own times. There followed, a few days afterwards, a long talk between William and the judge, in the latter's room in the court house. William had called at the court house on business, and the judge, who had espied him in the corridor, had called him in. For a time their conversation was of the stage and William's prospective future thereon, and then, very quietly, the judge began to talk about William himself. Presently William began to lean toward the talker, intent, earnest; no one had spoken to him before just like this. His father had tried once or twice, but his evident embarrassment, his halting sentences, and his fear lest William should misunderstand, had frightened, rather than impressed, the boy. But the judge was saying the things William knew his father had tried to say, and he was losing none of them. The sacredness of the body, his lordship was emphasising this, and dilating upon it: the

purity of the heart and mind; respect of woman; the honour of a man; reverence to God. William afterwards wrote the words out almost as fully as though he had taken them all down at the time. Nothing had so moved him as this talk. When he stood at the door to go, the judge placed one hand on his shoulder, and said simply, "My boy, it has cost me something to say these things. I am a husband and a father. God knows how much he has to forgive in me—God—knows. Those I love best—my wife—my little girl—they could never dream. But—will you try to remember, sometimes, some of these things?"

William put out his hand and the judge shook it warmly. The boy was late getting back to the office, and Whimple was testy. "Where on earth have you been, William?" he asked, sharply; "there's a good deal of work to do, and we can hardly catch up to it to-day."

"I'm sorry. I've been listening to a man," said William, quietly.

"Must have been a preacher, and a mighty solemn one at that, judging from your sober face," said Whimple, more gently.

"Not exactly a preacher, but I never heard

a better sermon," answered William, quietly, "never;" and then he started on his work, and kept at it to such effect that, when they closed up for the night, Whimple declared, as he had often done before, "You're certainly a wonder, William."

CHAPTER XXX

WILLIAM made his first professional appearance in Toronto in the autumn of that year with Joe Mertle's Company in *Old Etobicoke*, a rural comedy-drama that was immensely popular in its day and had a long run. The company was two weeks in the old Academy of Music before taking the road; and from the first night drew large audiences. William had two parts. In the first and second acts he merely "appeared," describing himself to his friends as "part of the scenery." In the third and fourth acts he had a speaking part, and in the latter a chance for a little bit of comedy that, short as it was, gave him a real opportunity. The whole Turnpike family was there, from Dorothy up, so was Whimple, Miss Whimple, Tommy Watson, both his assistants, Sally Miller, Lucien Torrance, and "Chuck" Epstein of course. They all sat together, occupying two boxes. The old comedian was too happy to say much even between the acts. He watched William keenly, and often nodded approval, though he frowned

once or twice when the youth made little "breaks." When the curtain fell, he waited with the others for William, and, as they stood in the lobby, the dean of the dramatic critics, a life-long friend of the old comedian, approached him. "Not bad, Epstein," he said.

"It will make a hit on the road," Epstein answered.

"Know any of the cast outside of Mertles?"

"A few."

"Who is the kid with the funny name—'William Adolphus Turnpike'?"

"Why?"

"He's the pick of the new ones. There's a great promise in that lad. If he doesn't get swelled head early in the game he'll soon be shining."

The old comedian smiled happily. "He's a friend of mine: a pupil, in a way—I'm glad you like him."

"You're a rare one to pick out the good ones, 'Chuck,'" said the critic, warmly. "The lad will be a credit to you if——"

"If," echoed Epstein.

"If he doesn't get swelled head, as I said before. That's the trouble with a lot of the

promising ones," he added, as he walked away.

"He may get swelled head," said Epstein to himself, as William joined the waiting group, "but it won't last long, I'm sure of that." He greeted William affectionately. "You'll do, boy," he said kindly, "you'll do. There are some things about your part I'd like to discuss with you, but I'm proud of you, William."

The little supper for William and "the bunch," arranged by Tommy Watson, was a rather gloomy affair. Pa and Ma Turnpike were not used to such affairs; the younger Turnpikes were timid. William was silent, and all were under the depressing spell of the knowledge that they would soon part with him.

The morning papers the next day were very kindly in their criticism of the play and of the company, but only one of them, that for which the dean of critics wrote, had any special mention of William. "His part was a small one: until the fourth act he had no real chance, and then he made the most of it. There is rare promise in the youth, but there are many pitfalls for those who go on the stage. The next few years will be a time of testing for him: if he

emerges successfully there is no reason to doubt that he will win his way to the front rank as a comedian." Epstein's eyes were tear-dimmed as he read the words: William cut them out of his own copy of the paper and kept them stowed away with other precious belongings that he carried on his travels for years.

The company left Toronto on a Sunday morning for a five months' tour. Pa and Ma Turnpike and William did not go to bed after he reached home from the theatre on the Saturday night. There was no trunk packing to do; that had been attended to hours before. But there was much to be said between those three, and none could say it without tears and broken voices. And so at last they sat together, Pa Turnpike on one side and William on the other side of Ma's easy chair. She held one of William's hands tightly in her own, and when she could, she talked to him the mother talk that so many have heard and heeded not, and would give all they have to hear again. And William made promises to keep his feet dry; to watch his throat; to be careful of the food he ate; to take all the sleep he could, and then, fifty times at least, to leave liquor alone, and to write home

as often as he could. Pa Turnpike backed his wife strongly on the liquor question. "Leave it alone, boy," he said, "leave it alone: it never was, and never will be, any good." And William nodded assuringly. "Don't be afraid of that," he said confidently, "I've got no use for it."

At eight o'clock in the morning there was a hurried call to the bedrooms occupied by the younger Turnpikes, and William kissed them gently, for all but Pete were fast asleep. Pete jumped out of bed and dressed hurriedly. "I'm going to the station with 'Mister Actor Man,'" he announced, and a few minutes later William, Pete, and Pa Turnpike, in one of the latter's express wagons, with one trunk containing William's stock of clothes, proceeded briskly down the street. William's mother stood at the door answering with her own the waving of William's handkerchief until the wagon turned a corner. . . . Then she went back to weep.

Inside the Union Station—that horror of horrors that still appals the train-borne visitors to a great city—William and his escorts were met by Lucien, Whimple, and Epstein. There was much affected gaiety, but the hopes for

William's future were almost overwhelmed in the deep regret at his departure. Tommy Watson was an absentee, and William felt this keenly, although he said nothing of it. Pa Turnpike made a shrewd guess at the cause of his boy's furtive glances around the station, and murmured to Epstein, "I thought Mr. Watson would have been down."

"So did I," answered the old comedian, a little apologetically, "but perhaps——" and then he looked around sharply as the music of a brass band echoed along the vaulted roof of the station. And what think you the band was playing? "Will ye no come back again." Yes, and playing it well, too. As the band came into view from one of the arched crossings, the faces of the group around William lit up with smiles, for, marching proudly in front, and carrying an enormous bunch of roses, was Tommy Watson, his head erect, his shoulders well back, his face aglow. To his signal the band aligned in front of the little group, and broke into a new tune, a lilting march, written around a then popular song, now almost forgotten, "Bill, our Bill." Perhaps there are some who still remember the chorus:—

"Bill, our Bill, see him smile,
On fair days and dull days,
Oh, it's well worth while,
To watch him at work,
To see him at his play;
Bill, our Bill; see him smile."

After they had played the chorus several times, the bandsmen sang it, William's friends joining in.

"Rotten verse," said Lucien Torrance, when they were through, "but it fits you, William Adolphus Turnpike—our Bill."

"Where did you get the band, Tommy?" asked Epstein.

"Minstrel show; arrived in Toronto before daylight for a week's engagement," retorted Tommy, proudly, and in curt sentences; "know the leader; copped him at breakfast; arranged terms in five minutes; great send-off to the coming world-famous comedian. Sorry couldn't bring Tommy junior down; sleeping; would have enjoyed it."

Then to William he handed the roses. "Boy," he said gravely, and with a touch of tenderness in his tone, "a lady, a young lady, gave me these with this message, 'Please tell Mr. Turnpike I wish him success.'"

Some say William blushed. William still stoutly denies it; but he could not speak for a moment. His heart was beating wildly; his hands trembled as he took the roses and held them a second or two to his face. He looked up again, self-possessed and quiet. "Thank you, Tommy," he said, simply.

"Is there a——" began Lucien, eagerly.

William broke in gently, "Don't, Lucien," he said, "my career is first—yet. I dare not hope—what sometimes I have dared to hope. I——"

"All aboard!" The hoarse cry of the train despatcher rolled out the words, and the clanging of the station bell followed. As the train began to slowly draw out of the station the band again struck up "Bill, our Bill." William stood on the rear platform of the train, the roses in one hand, the other waving farewell until the train disappeared, the while the band played on.

Then his friends slowly left the station, Lucien walking with Tommy Watson. "Roses for William," said Lucien, "and from a young lady!"

"Yes — and a charming young lady, too, my boy."

"Who is she, Tommy?" Lucien ventured, diffidently.

Tommy shook his head slowly. "Not now, Lucien; not now. The dreams of youth do not always come true, but," with a happy laugh, "William has such a way of making his come true. Who knows?"

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